Dollars and Democracy

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BY SIR PHILIP BUDNE-JONES, BT.

With Numerous Illustrations from Original Drawings by the Author

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A year spent in the United States, under very fortunate conditions, has given me opportunities for observing some of the national virtues and shortcomings, from the highest to the lowest (if the Spirit of Democracy will permit such invidious distinctions), such as are not always available to the traveller whose time is more limited.

At all events, the common taunt of Americans against the foreigner who spends a fortnight in their country and returns home considering himself fully qualified to write an exhaustive treatise on their social and political institutions, is not applicable in the present case.

To begin with, I stayed there quite long enough to get a very fair idea of the lay of the land, and whatever I have written has been the result of personal observation or conviction. And then, this is not a treatise at all—it is merely a series of notes and impressions, jotted down without much vi system at the end of a year of absolutely new experiences, while they are still fresh in the memory.

In describing people and things, I have approached them entirely from the point of view of an Englishman, noting especially those details of custom and manner, however trivial, wherein they differ from ourselves.

In so doing I have written honestly, without fear or favour, knowing well that the imperfections of our American cousins will easily find their counterpart with us across the sea, while their manifold excellences can hardly be outshone, even among kinsmen upon whose dominions the sun never sets.

Philip Burne-Jones.

London, *October, 1903.*

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I Voyage out—Scent of New York—Arrival—Interviewers—Studio—Custom-house

MOST people, I suppose, feel at some time or other in their lives that they have got into a groove—that the days follow each other with too monotonous regularity, and that, generally speaking, to use a favourite colloquial Americanism, “there's nothing doing.” They seem, for the time being, to have come to the end of their tether, and, straining at the rope, to find that they are only describing a tiresome circle round and round an invisible centre, which seems to hold them spellbound and paralyze all effort for greater freedom. They have come to the end, so it seems, of friends and acquaintances, their ideas and conversation are becoming stale—they are 4 beginning to repeat themselves. Their whole being, physical and intellectual, seems to demand an absolute change of surrounding—to

crave fresh opportunities. This, I imagine, is at one time or another an experience common to most of us.

Such a mood was upon me in the early months of last year. I felt there was nothing for it but to cut loose from all my old surroundings and associations for a time, and to live in new cities, among new faces, and under new conditions; to be somewhere, anywhere, where things were not quite so hackneyed as they had got to be at home; where my own personality would not be such a terribly open book to my companions; where there would be some novelty and mystery about them for me. In short, to get to some place where I wasn't known myself, and didn't know others.

And to any one in such a plight, what idea could be more exhilarating or hopeful than that of a trip to the United States?

The very words sounded cheery and refreshing and full of untold possibilities.

There was the Atlantic to cross, that was true. But that couldn't last forever, and when one 5 arrived at the other side, there was no limit to the exciting and interesting things that might happen. One might amass an immense fortune (that was improbable); one might even discover the Ideal Woman (more improbable still). In any case, there was an element of chance about the whole proceeding, which presented many attractions.

I had always got on well with Americans; some of them, men and women, I counted among my best friends. What more natural, then, than to wish to see them at home, among themselves, in their own country?

I had a vision of a vast continent full of the most bewitching girls, clad in the daintiest costumes, delighted to see me, and ready to extend their pretty hands in a natural and unaffected camaraderie, only possible in America. Their husbands and brothers—strong, manly, simple folk—I pictured to myself as constantly at work somewhere out of sight, chiefly in “Wall Street,” wherever that was, leaving their wives and sisters free to entertain

me , and glad to think that they were doing so. I had heard much of the unselfishness of American men.

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Expanding with these comfortable reflections, I bought a new travelling trunk of vast proportions, and set to work, packing in real earnest. I am a painter by profession, so I took a quantity of blank canvases (for which I had to pay duty, and which I might just as well have bought on the other side), together with some finished pictures, to show what I could do. And, by the same token, I wonder why it is that an Englishman, starting for a for a foreign country, so often thinks it necessary to load himself up with articles from home which he could buy just as well or better in the cities he visits abroad. I suppose it is something instinctive in our insular nature.

After years of travelling, I have not yet succeeded in entirely banishing a sense of wonder and admiration at the sight of neckties or pyjamas in a foreign shop-window. But this is a digression.

I booked my passage on the Oceanic, which 7 I consider the finest liner afloat, partly, I suppose, because I've never been on any other. The crossing was a very agreeable one. The captain was a most courteous gentlemen, under whose genial guidance I made a tour of the entire ship one day, a walk of something like a mile and a half.

We had head winds all the way, but they didn't in the least affect our comfort, for the boat was so huge that nothing seemed to trouble her, and her movement was hardly noticeable. We played innumerable games of poker, at which I did not distinguish myself, but which served to pass the time very pleasantly. The great waves “mountains high” which I had so often heard of and dreaded, “huge valleys into which the ship sank, to rise again upon terrific crests,” had no existence—at all events, upon this occasion; and the good ship sighted the Statue of Liberty and the “sky-scrapers” in excellent time, and was duly pushed and shoved into dock by those comic, busy little tugs that dart out like street

urchins on all sides upon the approach of a big steamer, and I stood upon American soil at last.

While still out at sea, I had become conscious 2 8 of a perfectly new and indescribable scent, which was wafted towards us from the land, and I had realized that this was the smell which I should forever afterward associate with New York. Almost every big city has its characteristic smell—London, Paris, Venice, Cairo—all have perfectly distinct atmospheres, which are peculiar to themselves, which one recognises at once, and never for a moment confuses with that of any other place. And so, too, New York has a distinct smell of its own—very agreeable and aromatic, I remember thinking it. I have lost the sense of it long since—such impressions are subtle and ephemeral to a degree—but I should know it again wherever I met it, and if a breath of it could reach me in far-off Europe one day, and I closed my eyes, I believe it would revive past memories in a way that only scents and melodies can, and that I should feel for a brief moment that I had been transplanted once more into Fifth Avenue or Central Park.

Wandering in bewildered uncertainty in the dock shed, searching for my scattered luggage (half of it had got stuck under “B” and half 9 under “J”) and offering sops of anxious urbanity to the custom-house Cerberus, who had already pounced upon me, I fell an easy prey to the little band of reporters who hang about the quay on the arrival of the European steamers, eager for “copy,” however trivial—something, anything that can be twisted or turned into a paragraph that will bring them a few cents. I got to know these men better later on; but these were early days, and I talked to them.

Though they advertised my arrival sufficiently, and more than sufficiently for my professional welfare (I remember, among other things, their announcing in huge head-lines that I was “not an artist at poker”), yet they probably found that the event, 10 important as it was to me, was not of such universal interest but that the account of it might be supplemented with advantage by draughts upon their own prolific imagination. Accordingly, a few days after landing, I read in a newspaper that I had met with a terrible

accident, and had been badly burned—set on fire, in fact, the evening before, in a friend's rooms which I had never visited, and under graphically described circumstances which had never had the remotest existence in fact.

I soon found a studio and apartments in a convenient and central position—in a delightful building, quite new, about ten stories high (rather a low house for New York), and facing a little square called Bryant Park. There was a luxurious French restaurant on the ground floor, which I afterward found very useful.

During my first weeks in this new home I remember undergoing one or two acute attacks of nostalgia, as I sat alone in the *café* , eating my solitary dinner to the strain of a heart-breaking orchestra. One can have some of the saddest moments of one's life, I think, dining alone at 11 restaurants and listening to the band. At such moments the gayest and most brilliant *valse* brings tears to one's eyes. But in New York one has no time for loneliness, and this mood soon passed—new friends were made, invitations began to pour in, and all was well.

My landlord was himself an artist, and owned the entire building, restaurant and all. He had married a lady of vast fortune, and was thus in a position to indulge any extravagant whim in the decoration and arrangement of his own apartments. I have never seen anywhere so gorgeously an appointed studio as his.

The main doorway was a gilded Renaissance structure imported bodily from some church in Venice; there was a splendid organ, played by an electric attachment a quarter of a mile away, at the other end of the room; there were innumerable skilful arrangements for the subduing or intensifying of light; and a vast Eastern couch, suspended by gilded chains from the lofty ceiling, so that it swung luxuriously a few inches from the ground, as you reposed in Oriental *abandon* among its sumptuous cushions. Hard by were 12 little Persian tables, furnished, as it seemed to me, with perennial supplies of cigars and cigarettes and whiskies and sodas—and this, though the chief, was only one of many

rooms, equally gorgeous. It was a mystery to me how this man succeeded in painting at all under such distracting conditions; but he always seemed to have some new large canvas on hand, which was duly completed in the intervals of business connected with the building itself or the regulation of several millions of acres of ranch land in the remote West, over which he held some Government appointment. He was a man of much information and many interests, and a most agreeable companion, and I shall never forget his unfailing courtesy and hospitality during my stay in New York.

After a fortnight's struggle with the custom-house officials over my poor paintings, which I only got released after appealing for help to Washington, I had a little exhibition of my work at a dealer's in Fifth Avenue—from which I retired the poorer. However, while it lasted, crowds flocked in all day, and I had the satisfaction of 13 realizing, as I paid the dealer his bill, that I had at least helped to advertise his gallery for him.

I will not enlarge here upon the enormities of the New York custom-house officials, or their exasperating ways. They have been too frequently discussed in the public press, and bitter memories of them are probably still vivid in the minds of victims who have suffered indignities at their hands. Suffice it to say, that I had my full share of discomfort and loss of time, while waiting for the solution of the simplest problem, which a little courage and common sense would have set straight in half a day.

The officials themselves are so immeshed in red tape and stand in such abject fear of each other, no one daring to express an opinion on any question without consulting some one else in another department, that it is a wonder to me that as much work is got through as actually is accomplished in the day—miserably little as that is.

Of the long hours wasted at my broker's and at the custom-house, I carry away one pleasant memory only, that of the courteous head of the Naval Office, who, one day, after I had 14 been hanging about for hours and was almost fainting for want of food, produced a large red apple, which he offered to me, and which I devoured gratefully and ravenously.

From that moment the most friendly relations were established between us, and the apple became a standing joke which never palled. On subsequent occasions, whenever we had reason to meet, he would laughingly produce an apple, which I always accepted and ate in his presence, much to our mutual entertainment. We also exchanged several sketches, and once I became the recipient at his hands of the somewhat embarrassing gift of a huge rattlesnake skin, nailed out upon a board. In short, we were fast friends; but he never allowed his friendliness to interfere with his official duties, and to the end, I regret to say, he remained incorruptible.

I was now well established in New York, and after the first hectic and exhausting days of arrival, was at leisure to turn round and take stock of the strange new conditions by which I found myself surrounded.

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II ENGLISH AND AMERICANS—FRANTIC RUSH OF NEW YORK—SIXTH AVENUE—STREET-CARS—SPITTING—CABS

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II English and Americans—Frantic Rush of New York—Sixth Avenue—Street-cars—Spitting—Cabs

AN Englishman cannot spend a day in the streets of New York without receiving many perfectly new impressions, based chiefly upon a mental comparison, asserting itself automatically at every turn, between the way they do things over there and the way he has always been accustomed to doing things at home; and he is constantly being pulled up by the contrast—a contrast all the more extraordinary because of the similarity which at first sight seems to exist between the two countries.

Speaking almost the same language, with much history in common, sharing the same literature, the American and the Englishman are yet in 18 most respects as the poles asunder; and it is from widely different windows that each looks out upon the same world.

Yet this very difference in their attitude towards life is a constant source of interest and stimulating reflection to both, and the bond of blood and kinship is always betraying itself by the eagerness with which each nationality criticises and investigates the manners and customs of the other.

“Well, and what do you think of America.?” the hackneyed inquiry, with which, in one form or another, the newcomer is assailed on all sides by every one, from the professional interviewer to the charming young lady who sits next you at a dinner party, is something more than a parrot cry to produce “copy” or stimulate conversation. It often betokens a very real and sometimes slightly anxious desire to know just exactly how this great, new wonderful country—the growth of little more than a century—strikes the stranger from beyond the seas, with his long legacy of prejudice and tradition; and somewhere behind it, too, there lurks the spirit of the truant child, who, having rid itself of all home ties, looks back 19 somewhat wistfully to the place of its birth, perhaps not yet wholly indifferent to parental approbation. And it is with profound interest and sympathy that the dweller in the old discarded home must regard this unique and precocious offspring; for we have much to learn from one another.

As the great steamer drifted down the North River a few weeks ago, bearing me slowly away from the shores where I had spent so many happy months, I looked longingly back at the hideous sky-scrapers which desolate the lower end of the island upon which New York is built, wondering whether I should ever set eyes on them again—those grotesque giants whose all-pervading personality had so painfully impressed itself upon my daily life for the greater part of a year. At this moment I felt a strange attraction to them—though I had lost no opportunity of abusing them roundly while I lived within their shadow—due probably to the fact of their typifying, as nothing else does quite so completely, the spirit of modern 20 New York; for it was with grateful and affectionate memories of modern New York that my heart was just then very full.

I gazed at them until they faded away upon the horizon, and then, for the first time in twelve months, there descended upon me an inexpressible sense of peace and rest.

For the chief impression you get on landing in New York, and the last you have on leaving it, is of an atmosphere of frightful hurry and restless bustle everywhere. It is very fatiguing. On all sides men and women in the streets seem urged and driven by some frantic Demon of Haste—whither and for what cause one could never guess. One wondered again and again what could possibly be of such overwhelming importance as to justify this atrocious economy of time—at the expense of such tremendous nerve strain, of health, and often of life itself. What is there in the air of New York, different to that of other cities, which would explain this headlong stampede of its citizens? The children playing in the streets seem anxiously alert—babies in arms often look thoughtful and careworn, and glance sharply up 21 at you, with fatigued, nervous eyes. The very cats appear *distraites* , and preoccupied, and as though they were late for an appointment. Who ever would stop to say, “Puss! puss!” to an American cat? And the dogs are dreadfully busy, too. The popular expressions “to get a move on,” “to hustle,” “to step lively,” and the more dignified allusions by the President himself to the “strenuous life,” are all colloquial straws that show which way the national wind is blowing.

The spirit of restlessness becomes contagious; and one steps along oneself with increased activity, feeling vaguely eager to reach some goal—to achieve some object—one hardly knows what.

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I think the climax of this unrest is reached in Sixth Avenue. Imagine a long, unlovely street, of the type of the Edgware Road, with a screeching, reeking train on lofty iron stilts, running every few seconds overhead, on a level with the first-floor windows—the famous elevated railway—thundering and reechoing along its iron girders with nerve-shattering din, forming a sort of tunnel of the street beneath, along which electric tram-cars, driven at break-neck speed, follow each other in rapid succession, heralded by a gong loud

enough to wake the dead, but not to save the living, and rendering all collected thought or rational conversation in the streets quite out of the question; and in addition to all this, cabs and carts clattering along the cobbles and catching their wheels in the tram-lines, an anxious crowd of pedestrians occupying the pavements on either side, and you have a feeble impression of the pandemonium of Sixth Avenue. There are other similar avenues throughout the city to which the same description applies.

It takes some apprenticeship and fortitude to effect an entry into a New York surface car. To 23 begin with, it won't always stop for you, by any means. Whether it does so or not largely depends upon the mood of the motorman. If he observes any signs of weakness or uncertainty on your part, he is as likely as not to speed past you with contemptuous indifference. As a rule, however, it does stop—for the fraction of a minute—but it will start again upon its headlong career before you have had time to seat yourself, if you are fortunate enough to find a vacant place, or to adjust your equilibrium, if you are compelled to stand. 3

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In the latter event, you are pretty sure, in obedience to the laws of inertia, to be violently precipitated backward upon your next-door neighbour. This is so common an occurrence that apologies are hardly expected, and rarely offered. The utmost good nature prevails, and a gracious smile of forgiveness on the face of your victim, as he removes crushed toes or bruised ribs, greets your own expression of regret; and you in your turn treat those who are hurled against you with similar indulgence.

“A Pittsburg woman has just been killed by the strain of riding in an overcrowded street-car. New Yorkers have strong hearts and strong ribs not to fall victims by the dozen to the worse crowding to which they are subjected here.”

The above paragraph from the New York Tribune of a short time back will show what the inhabitants themselves think of their principal mode of conveyance.

During what are known as the “rush hours”—dread words—when people are returning home in the late afternoon from business or shopping, the situation becomes intolerable, and the 25 crowds that crush and jam into the electric cars defy description. There is no limit to the number of passengers which is admitted into these cars.

Men and women are subjected to every form of indignity that intimate yet reluctant physical proximity to one another can suggest. When the seats are all occupied, the central aisle is soon filled with a serried mass of seething humanity, hanging on frantically to stout straps provided for the purpose (hence the elegant phrase “straphanger”), packed together like sardines, through which the conductor, usually not specially distinguished for either courtesy or cleanliness, struggles and edges and shoulders his way, collecting fares. Upon receiving them, he touches an apparatus which rings a bell, at the same time registering upon a dial the number of passengers on that particular journey. When I first saw this arrangement I thought that the figures displayed indicated the number of the street we were at. And it would be a great convenience if some plan for doing this could be devised, as one is often carried far beyond one's corner, through 26 the impossibility of finding out just where one is.

In curious contrast to the tearing tram-cars which rush through the other streets of the city is the ancient omnibus, drawn by two antediluvian horses, which still crawls up and down Fifth Avenue. Motor omnibuses have lately been added, but some of the original 'buses still survive—with the outside seat for half a dozen passengers above the driver—and no conductor whatever. Conscience and public opinion inside are the only motives for paying fares; and the eager hands of those who have already settled their account are at once stretched out towards the newcomer, whose five cents are gladly passed along by his fellow-travellers and deposited in the little money box beneath the driver's feet. One feels as if every journey of this venerable vehicle might be its last; but one welcomes it as the remnant—about the only one in the whole city—of an older and different order of things, when time was not so feverishly valuable and life still had something left to it of repose.

Neither these omnibuses nor the tram-cars carry 27 any outside advertisements, and their appearance contrasts very favourably with that of our own vulgar-looking omnibuses in London.

The disgusting and unhealthy habit of spitting incessantly seems deeply seated among the lower orders of the American race, and stringent notices issued by the Board of Health, forbidding, under penalties of five hundred dollars fine or a year's imprisonment or *both* , indulgence in this particular form of pleasure, are always conspicuous in the interior of the cars. One shudders to contemplate the enormity of the offence which would entail the double punishment, but a brief experience of the streets of New York would enable any one to recall instances where ample justification for its infliction seemed obvious. In Boston, I noticed that the fine was only one hundred dollars, and I don't think you were imprisoned at all—an additional proof, if any were needed, of the comparative rarity of the offence, and of the superior manners of this enlightened city.

The following quaint notice was, until quite recently, posted up on the ferry-boats plying between New York and Jersey City: “Gentlemen 28 will not, others must not, spit on the floor.”

And I saw a short time ago that it was proposed to issue yellow tickets—badges of disgrace—which the conductors on the tram-cars were to be instructed to offer any offender in the hope of this bringing him to public shame before his fellow-travellers, and so mitigating the evil.

There are few physical experiences quite so uncomfortable as a ride in a New York street-car during the “rush hours”; yet these cars and the elevated railway are the only available method of transit for people of moderate means. Cabs are altogether out of the question. The fares demanded are simply preposterous. They will hardly move under a dollar (four shillings), and the drivers, adepts at extortion, although I believe there is legislation to restrain them, seem responsible to no one.

The cab industry of New York is at present in its infancy. Several attempts have been made to systematize and start cabs on reasonable terms, but so far without success. Of course, so long as people will pay the ridiculous prices at present demanded, the cabmen will continue to ask them; 29 and New York is so full of extremely rich people that doubtless the “cabbies” see no reason why they should adhere to the legal fares, if they can get more. But all the same, the cab in New York is a rich man's luxury. It must be added that it is very uncomfortable driving in any vehicle but a surface car in the streets of New York (with the exception of Fifth Avenue) because of the tram-lines, which are perpetually catching and wrenching the wheels. There are cobbles, too, down the centre of many of the streets, which make it additionally unpleasant driving.

III THE AMERICAN CHILD—ICE-WATER—COCKTAILS—HOT STEAMPIPES—WINTER IN NEW YORK—BOOTS—“HELP”—“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN”—SERVANTS IN AMERICA—SUMMER HEAT—SENTIMENT.

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III The American child—Ice-water—Cocktails—Hot steam-pipes—Winter in New York —Boots—“Help”—“Ladies and gentlemen”—Servants in America—Summer heat— Sentiment.

IT was during these early days in New York that I first came across the American child, in the shape of the little son of a lovely American girl whom I had known years ago in Europe, and who had since married in America. Her husband welcomed me with much hospitality and kindness, and we then and there laid the foundation of what later developed into a real and lasting friendship. There were two children, both boys; an imp of five or six years of age and a baby in arms, whose 34 character, by the time I left, had hardly developed sufficiently to admit of analysis. But Fritz! How can I hope to describe him? With the outward semblance of an angel, for he was a most beautiful child, he combined, on occasion, the inward attributes of a diminutive demon. Obedience or respect for elders were ideas with which he had no concern. His parents exercised small control over him

—he was entirely a law unto his small and irresponsible self. In a rash moment, struck by the loveliness of the little fellow, I asked permission to paint his portrait, and there began a series of ‘sittings’—by courtesy so called—the restless and exhausting turbulence of which I shall never forget. At these times all the strenuous and hectic activity of young America seemed concentrated in that small form. He never sat still an instant. One morning he realized that I was particularly anxious to observe his face as I worked. That was sufficient. From that moment he systematically presented his little back, and it was only by pretending that I didn't want to see his face at all, and preferred his back, that, out of sheer perversity, 35 he vouchsafed me a glance at his seraphic countenance. The only human being of whom he stood the least in awe was an old dragon of a German nurse, Monica, who, by alternately coaxing him with Grimm's fairytales and threatening him with untold penalties, induced a reluctant and intermittent obedience, by which I was eventually enabled to produce a picture—I won't say a portrait which his parents were good enough to accept as a record of their offspring.

I remember that Monica's system of discipline included daily doses of castor-oil, administered in no niggardly spirit, and many a bitter wail and 36 distortion of angelic features announced the sufferings of poor Fritz under this inhuman treatment. But no amount of physical discomfort or mental terrorism ever succeeded in taming this proud spirit.

“I'II kick your head!” was an awful threat, picked up no one knew where, demonstrating the aggressive independence of this small republican. I have heard him so address his grandmother.

“Fritz, for *shame!* Say *excuse* me, grandma.” (This from his father.) Dead silence on the part of Fritz.

Then, more severely: “Fritz, stand at attention! Now say ‘ *Excuse* me, grandma.’” Drawing his small feet together, with flushed and sullen cheeks and downcast eyes, the beautiful

little creature would then utter a few perfunctory and scarcely audible sounds, which were generously construed by the family as expressive of contrition and penitence; and Fritz started again with a clear record, for a brief period. His mother had absolutely no influence over him whatever, and she admitted as much. At meal-times Fritz was in his glory. Habitually setting at naught 37 all accepted canons of behaviour for children, he would loudly demand to be served first, and clamour for the choicest dishes. “I want some more pudding!”—“If what?”—“If there *is* any.” If Fritz was not the hero of this anecdote of an American infant, he well might have been. But do not let me give the impression that insubordination and naughtiness were his chief characteristics. He could, if he chose, become as sweet and good as any little boy need be—until yells from the nursery would proclaim that he had once more transgressed, and that Monica was probably administering an additional dose of castor-oil. Dear, turbulent little spirit and body, I wonder whether I shall ever set eyes on you again, and if I do, what you will have grown into!

Fritz was by no means a negligible quantity in the mental vision of my year's visit; and, as he and his parents were destined to play an important part in the drama of my summer life at Oyster Bay, later on, I will bid them only a temporary adieu now.

There is nothing like travel for removing insular 38 prejudice of all kinds. At home I used to listen with amazement to reports of the ubiquitous ice-water; how the first thing a waiter did when you entered a restaurant was to set a glass of ice-water before you, and how ice-water followed or preceded you at every turn throughout the day; and I used to regard with compassion the rash indifference to the laws of digestion thus displayed, and had privately attributed the nervous American physique to inordinate indulgence in ice-water and cocktails.

I had not been in New York twenty-four hours before I was afflicted with a raging thirst, which I found that ice-water alone, and nothing on earth but ice-water, and that in no measured quantity, was capable of assuaging. I simply craved ice-water continually, and

have now come to the commonplace conclusion that the customs of one country, which appear unreasonable or ridiculous to another, have probably some excellent ground for their existence. Whatever the cause of the desire for ice-water, winter and summer, in America may be, the fact remains that only ice-water will quench one's thirst there. It may be due to 39 a lack of humidity in the atmosphere, which, as we all know, is not the case in England. As for cocktails, I grew to like them extremely, though I cannot but think that they are injurious, and that to swallow a glass of raw gin and vermuth before a meal, must be a very unwholesome thing to do. This habit, however, is by no means universal, and, of course, it is very much more frequently indulged in by men than by women, though these, too, often succumb.

Before visiting America I had anticipated with some alarm “the terribly over-heated houses,” and the danger to health involved in the change of temperature when one quitted them for the bitter outside air. Well, I certainly never found the houses too hot. They were, to my mind, extremely comfortable and agreeable so far as temperature went; and, provided one removes 4 40 one's overcoat immediately upon entering a house, and puts it on again the moment one leaves, my experience points to the well-warmed houses as being an excellent preventive and safeguard against chills and colds. Through the admirable system of steam and hot-water pipes almost universally in vogue (open fireplaces being the exception, and being always supplemented by steam-heat), it is possible to regulate the temperature to any degree one wishes, and it remains the same throughout the entire room, which, of course, is not the case where fireplaces only are in use.

Apart from the absence of a cheerful blaze, which I confess one *does* miss, I think hot-water pipes an improvement on our system of house heating; for there is no need for the presence of a dirty and cumbrous coal-scuttle and the attendant bother of incessantly “making up” a fire, and there isn't any dust. As a set-off against these advantages, the hot air in American houses, by reason of its intense dryness, has a tendency to crack wooden articles of furniture and pictures painted on panel. I remember seeing a fine painting by

Rossetti cracked right across from 41 this cause, and a portrait which I had myself painted on panel, and which had once been broken and mended in England, gaped asunder again one day after hanging in my New York studio for a year. The pipes, also, have rather a startling habit of suddenly gurgling and gasping when you least expect it—in the middle of the night, for choice—which I never got thoroughly accustomed to. In consequence of the houses being so evenly heated throughout, Americans have got into the way of living with all their doors wide open. The drawing-room or “parlor” door is invariably open into the hall, and all other rooms have the doors open between them, which does much to remove any sense of repose or privacy. Bedroom doors are, as a rule, kept closed, though I remember staying at one house where my host always slept with his wide open.

So in both these cases of ice and heat I found that my preconceived notions had been at fault.

The climate of New York is very trying, but hardly more so than that of England. Indeed, the comparative dryness and absence of damp must be healthier.

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Though on the same parallel of latitude as Naples, the extremes of heat and cold one experiences in New York are unlike anything to be met with in Southern Europe.

The winters are, as a rule, severe, though absolutely free from fog; and the bright, clear, sunny mornings of November, December, and January compared most pleasantly with my recollections of those months in London.

Snow and frost are pretty incessant, though, between December and March. During all the winter months the horses in the streets, while waiting or standing still, are enveloped in blankets 43 and shawls, a sure sign of how necessary it is to protect them from the severity of the weather. In this manner they stand patiently for hours, presenting rather a

comic appearance; but their backs and chests are not exposed to the bitter winds, their temporary comfort is insured, and their lives prolonged.

The streets of the city after a thaw are flooded with an icy slush, which permeates one's boots as nothing else can, and makes goloshes or “rubbers,” as they call them, absolutely indispensable. I fought against these as long as I could, partly because of the inconvenience of putting them on and taking them off when paying a call, and partly from vanity, for they are very ugly. But common sense prevailed, and I had to give in at last, for one of the chief causes of the chills, colds, and pneumonia so prevalent in New York during the winter months is wet feet, and there's no way to avoid these but to wear “rubbers.” For exceptionally severe weather they sell things called “arctics,” which cover the entire boot.

And while we're on this subject, I might as well mention the extraordinary aversion which 44 the free-born American citizen, however lowly, evinces toward anything connected with the cleaning of boots and shoes. He simply cannot bear it. I have often tried to evolve a satisfactory reason, without success. Whether it is he feels it to be beneath his dignity to brush a fellow-creature's boots, or whether he has a natural repugnance to blacking (in which case I'm with him), I cannot tell; but the fact remains, that unless you draw urgent attention to them, your boots are as likely as not to remain untouched by servants in hotels and private houses for days, as, indeed, will your entire wardrobe, for valeting is an art at present little practised in the United States.

Yet in humble life, when boots *are* cleaned, the operation takes place with extraordinary publicity. Large armchairs constructed for the purpose, with their necessary appurtenances, are stationed at intervals in the streets, and here the man who cannot get his shoes attended to at home sits and has them polished before all the world, and uncommonly well polished, too. But it is invariably an Italian or Irishman or other baseborn foreigner who officiates in the menial capacity 45 of boot-black. A native-born American boot-black, I imagine, does not exist. Possibly the same spirit of independence which

causes the revolt against boots has inspired a similar aversion to the term “servant.” Among certain members of the community in America you are not said to engage “servants”; you employ “help.”

Servants seeking situations and employers requiring servants advertise in the newspapers in columns under the heading “Help, male and female.” Doubtless this is a survival of the time when all men were practically equal in the new country, and household duties were attended to by the mistress and, perhaps, a humble friend who came in to “help”; but whatever the origin of the mood may be, in America the word “help” survives, and is, on the whole, preferred by aspirants to domestic service.

The old woman who does the washing is referred to by her friends as a “lady”; and they are all “gentlemen” to one another, from the man who “checks” your luggage to the vender of peanuts round the corner.

An amusing example of the lengths to which 46 this attitude of “gentility” will extend was afforded by a waiter on one of the railways. A friend of mine had occasion to ask him to perform some service. “No, I can't,” was his reply; “the other gentleman will attend to you,” referring to a fellow-servant a few yards off. The first waiter then strolled across to the second waiter, and my friend heard him say, “There's a man over there wants you to attend to him!” It is rare to have servants say “sir” to you, and they try to avoid saying “thank you” for a tip or anything else as far as they possibly can.

And here let me correct a statement which I have heard made that servants in America won't accept gratuities. This is quite a mistaken notion. I never yet came across any one in America, or anywhere else, who refused a “tip” of any description—nor, I imagine, can the reader recall such an instance. The whole question of servants in America is a very trying and complicated one. I take it that there are practically no native-born American servants. In their place the community is served by a motley crowd of English, Scotch, Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, and 47 negroes, the majority absolutely untrained

to start with, and finding no tradition of good training in the houses which they enter. The curious thing is that excellent and well-trained servants imported, say, from England, quickly deteriorate in their new surroundings, and it is only in the houses of extremely wealthy people that really good servants are seen. In average households there is always something weird and amateurish about the servant who opens the door—whether parlor-maid or footman. Constantly on inquiring whether one's hostess is at home one is met with the reply: “I don't know—I'll go and see,” 48 and there one is left, kicking one's heels in the hall, while the servant searches the house for the mistress. This has happened to me at even a gorgeously appointed house on Fifth Avenue.

If the winter in New York is bitter, the summer, on the other hand, is insufferably hot, and cases of sunstroke and heat apoplexy are very numerous. The sun beats down upon the pavement with pitiless ferocity, and all streets running east and west are subjected to this intense heat, without a particle of shade. This is one of the disadvantages of a town built on the principle of a chess-board; though there are practical conveniences connected with such a construction, notably the ease with which one finds one's way about, or *might* do so, if they would only take the trouble to write up the numbers of the streets at each corner. I believe they mean to do this in time—and New York is at present so very unfinished that perhaps it's not quite fair to criticise this particular oversight, though the absence of numbers is a very great inconvenience.

This possible advantage, however, hardly compensates for the absence of the picturesque irregularities 49 of the streets and squares of our own London; while surely one would say all sentiment must be at a discount in a city which will calmly tolerate such an address as “912 East 165th Street!” Yet one can hardly accuse a community of lack of sentiment which, out of respect for its dead, allows an old churchyard to remain unbuilt upon, in a part of the city where land is worth $130 a square foot, or which, as it recently did, diverted the whole course of a street in a new and much frequented quarter, so as to leave

untouched the grave of a little child of obscure parentage, buried there something like a century ago, at a time when the neighbourhood was deep country.

Public sentiment asserts itself also most unexpectedly in the refusal of the authorities to lease a huge hoarding in Fifth Avenue, outside the new Public Library, now being built, for advertising purposes, though the income they would derive from this source would be immense.

A similar commendable indifference to commercialism distinguishes the municipality of Boston, with regard to its subway. At the same time, they will desolate, without the slightest compunction, 50 the fields and orchards along the routes of their railways by permitting the exposure of gigantic placards proclaiming the excellence of somebody's pills or cigars—in this way vulgarizing the entire landscape—so that in the end they are just as contradictory as the rest of us.

IV

IV THE WOMEN OF NEW YORK—ABSENCE OF POVERTY—BATHS—TELEPHONES —ELECTRIC, LIGHT—SKY-SCRAPERS—THE POLICE—THE “YELLOW PRESS.”

IV The women of New York—Absence of poverty—Baths—Telephones—Electric light—Sky-scrapers—The police—The “yellow press.”

ONE of the first things that strikes the stranger in New York is the extreme smartness of the women—all of them, rich and poor, in their varying degrees—they are so well “set up,” so excellently “turned out,” so admirably “groomed.” They hold themselves, too, beautifully, and, in what we should call the lower-middle classes—shop-girls, telephone-girls, etc.—there is none of the slouching and stooping to which we are accustomed among the similar orders at home, nor any flaunting colours or cheap imitation jewelry.

In New York they all dress neatly and walk splendidly. The high average of neatness is very noticeable at once. One rarely comes across a really badly dressed woman in any rank of life. To dress well and make the very best of her resources, seems a gift peculiar to the American woman. Her Parisian sister, to whom I suppose she would herself admit that she was occasionally indebted for ideas, is not her superior in this respect. I imagine a well-dressed American woman is the best dressed woman in the world.

Another thing one notices at once is the absence of all signs of poverty in the streets. That poverty exists in New York as dark and terrible as that of London or Paris one knows; but unless one burrows beneath the surface, one knows it only by hearsay—one sees nothing of it. I cannot recall a single example of such objects of misery and destitution as one daily meets with in the streets of London. I was begged from once or twice only during my entire visit in America, and one of these occasions was in Boston.

The great cleanliness, too, of the population—even of the poorer people—is very remarkable. 55 The men, and especially the women, all seemed to have tubbed not only within the memory of man, but quite recently, and to be clean and presentable. The children of the poorer classes are all clean. This is a clear example of the pupil outstripping the master, for I take it that we in England were the pioneers of the bath in Europe; but America has left us sadly behind.

I think that there are three things which I miss most notably now that I have set foot again on English soil:

First, my beautiful snow-white tub, with its silver fittings and perennial supply of hot water and cold.

Secondly, my telephone, with a friend at the other end; for though we all know telephones exist in London, we know equally well that they communicate with no one, as a rule, but shops and theatres and an occasional doctor. In New York, and indeed generally

throughout the United States, a telephone has become as necessary a part of the equipment of a well-appointed house as, say, the aforesaid bath itself. The instrument is in constant use; and invitations to dinner and 5 56 the opera are frequently transmitted by this expeditious means. How pleasant it is, when one feels lonely or depressed, to call up a friend and hear his cheerful voice across the city. In New York it is the exception not to have a telephone. I'm not a bit sure that its possession doesn't add to the turbulence and anxieties of life; and I'm certain it increases the nervous strain, but it is a saving of time and trouble and unnecessary journeyings to and fro, and though my health will probably improve, I do, as I said, greatly miss my telephone.

The *third* thing I miss is the electric light—that really gives light. The bastard product of science and commercial enterprise known by the same name in London bears little resemblance to its transatlantic namesake.

I think Broadway at night, with its myriad brilliant lamps, the names of its theatres and restaurants picked out in blazing points of electric fire, is a sight not readily to be forgotten, and one which impresses itself upon the imagination as much as anything in the great city of which it is the principal thoroughfare.

57

The Waldorf-Astoria at night is also impressive, at a respectful distance, but the effect on the spectator of them both is due to the brilliancy and purity of the electric light as manufactured in New York.

I can do without “rapid transit”; I can do without a “quick lunch” (the very words give one indigestion); but I now know what baths, telephones, and electric light can be under the most favourable conditions; and henceforth I shall have a new standard in mind for all three, which I fear has not yet been attained in England.

But the rush of life is not confined to the traffic of the city. As they travel at fever-heat, so they build. Within the last few years this ingenious people has invented a new form of

architecture (never included by Ruskin in his Seven Lamps) which consists in raising, with incredible celerity, a structure of steel as high as safety or the municipal authorities—terms not always interchangeable—will allow.

Having built the framework, they put in the floors of fireproof tile in quite a haphazard fashion, long before they trouble about the walls. 58 You can see the floorings of half a dozen stories a hundred feet above you in the air, like the section of a gigantic doll's house, while the building is in course of construction. One day it suddenly occurs to them to put in a few walls—perhaps they'll begin with one fifty feet from the ground—and they will run up quite a number in a few hours, as inclination dictates. They then whiten this sepulchre with a thin veneer of stone, and New York is the richer by one more sky-scraper. It has yet to be proved that this form of building will endure. Those who cherish the dream of the possibility, in the remote future, of a beautiful New York, will not perhaps be altogether indifferent on the subject. The construction of these monstrosities has actually had an effect upon climatic conditions in the city.

One vast horror, facing Madison Square, is distinctly responsible for a new form of hurricane, which meets unsuspecting pedestrians as they reach the corner, causing them extreme discomfort. I suppose the wind is in some way intercepted by the towering height of the building, and forced down with fury into an unaccustomed 59 channel. When its effects first became noticeable, a little rude crowd of loafers and street arabs used to congregate upon the curb to jeer at and gloat over the distress of ladies whose skirts were blown into their eyes as they rounded the treacherous corner. Hanging about this particular spot soon became a recognised and punishable offence, and any one loitering there more than a few moments is now promptly “moved on” by the police. A lawsuit is also at this moment pending against the owner of this building, 60 brought by a neighbouring tradesman whose shop-window has twice been blown in by the newly created whirlwind.

At the same time, these excessively tall buildings have added about two hundred acres to the area of the business quarters of New York; so, until there is some terrible calamity from fire or other cause, I suppose they will continue to be built. I believe, however, that legislation is against the construction of buildings of this description.

Right and left, no time is lost. During the past year a church which stood a few doors from my apartments was completely demolished, and a huge ten-storied building, steel and stone veneer, raised in its place. It is only at night that these buildings are tolerable. Then, with the electric lights gleaming from a hundred windows, the dark mass of their giant forms silhouetted against the evening sky, there is something weird and fantastic about them which appeals to one—something strange and characteristic, if not actually picturesque.

At all events, they are unlike anything else on 61 earth; they are quite unique. So far, no other country that I know of has ventured to emulate them.

One of their least attractive peculiarities is the way in which they manage to dwarf and belittle the churches which are unfortunate enough to be situated in their immediate neighbourhood. Towering far above the steeples, these houses of business reduce to insignificance the houses of worship. Can it be that they are a silent comment by the modern American man of affairs on the relative importance which he attaches to the worship of God and Mammon?

Meantime, the seething, restless, strenuous crowd in the streets is being marshalled by a body of policemen, who make up in physical proportion what they lack in prestige. They are a fine set of men, immense in girth and stature—in other words, very much too fat, and their efforts to enforce law and order are not always crowned with success. Indeed, their authority is usually resented by those with whom they come in collision; and the control in which the London police hold the multitude and the admirable 62 spirit of submission to authority which characterizes a London crowd are wholly lacking in New York.

Congested traffic and street rows are dealt with by the police of New York in a half-hearted manner; and the tentative arm which is raised to stem the oncoming tide and enable an old lady to cross the street in safety, too often meets with scant respect at the hands of the approaching charioteer, who regards the policeman not so much as a humble incarnation of the law, whom it is his duty and interest to obey, as a tiresome individual on an equality with himself, who is gratuitously interfering with the liberty of a fellow-citizen—a potential president—and whom it is incumbent upon him to keep in his proper place.

The vast polished bludgeon which hangs so 63 conspicuously by the side of the New York policeman would be strangely “out of the picture” in Piccadilly.

The police are, however, popular favourites, to judge by the frequency with which reference is made to them and with which their portraits appear in the daily press. They are constantly behaving very nobly or very basely, and they figure alternately as heroes or corrupt villains, and in either case pictures of them are published in the newspapers, which I suppose interest somebody.

And talking of the newspapers. The press of America is in most instances conducted with a decorum and ability at least equal to that displayed by us across the Atlantic. But this is not always the case. There exists in America a form of daily journalism, happily unknown to us, which every right-minded person in that country deplores, yet seems powerless to suppress.

One must hope, for the dignity of a great people, that the “Yellow Press” of New York and other cities of America is only a passing 64 phase, which under improved conditions of education will one day develop into better things.

It is impossible that such garbage, under the guise of “journalism,” as is at present offered to the men and women of the United States can continue long to be acceptable. A day must surely come when they will realize its unworthiness and revolt against it. it is not

liberty which this press now enjoys—it is license. It panders to the very lowest instincts for personal gossip and morbid sensationalism. It is absolutely indifferent to truth. If facts are not exciting or startling enough, it invents lies. Its price is one cent; its circulation enormous. Among thoughtful people it is absolutely discredited, and all “news” contained in its columns is regarded with deep suspicion.

But it is the chief—in many cases the *only* “literature” of millions of human beings, whose principal vision of life in the great world must appear reflected in this distorted mirror.

The front page of one of these papers is like a bad dream. Colossal head-lines, in glaring type three inches high, announce the details of some 65 prize fight, murder, suicide, or railway disaster—while in one case additional insistence is imparted to special news by printing it in red ink. It would be manifestly unfair to single out this particular class of journalism for disapproval solely on the score of the horrors and scandals which it daily spreads broadcast over the country. Most newspapers contain such collections of murders, robberies, divorces, and what not. But it is the form in which it presents its wares, ingeniously seasoned to suit the vitiated palates of its patrons, which distinguishes it unfavourably from all other publications of the daily press. It is demoralized and demoralizing. Interviews that never took place at all, or if they did, appearing in such a garbled and perverted form that they are worse than the inventions; false news and lies of every possible description fill the pages of these pitiable publications. On Sundays they take a fresh, terrible lease of life—their bulk is suddenly quadrupled, and the homes of New York are devastated with tons of trash—which is read, often to the exclusion of better things, and the *débris* of which no ordinary sized waste-paper basket can 66 contain. And to provide suitable matter for its purposes, these papers send out daily an army of half-educated and needy individuals—little more than lads for the most part—who, with ceaseless activity and boundless impertinence, prowl about the city, collecting “stories,” soliciting “interviews,” inventing “fakes” of every description, pushing their way into houses,

respecting no privacy or sanctity of personal grief, sullying and smirching all they come in contact with—the very harpies of the gutter press of America.

These papers are no longer admitted into the best clubs; and the editors of them are becoming socially ostracized, and rightly so. But though shunned by the best of their fellow-citizens, they continue from their dishonoured retirement to direct and disseminate their pernicious publications, and it will be only by a revolution of public opinion, which I believe will one day occur, that this cancerous growth on healthy American journalism will be eradicated.

V SOCIAL EQUALITY—INTRODUCTIONS—“DOLLARS, DOLLARS, DOLLARS”—AMERICAN MEN—ON THE RAILWAY—THE NEW SUBWAY—NEW YORK HOUSES—VISITING.

V Social equality—Introductions—“Dollars, dollars, dollars”——American men—On the railway—The new Subway—New York houses—Visiting.

BAEDEKER says that the traveller in the United States “should, from the outset, reconcile himself to the absence of deference, or servility, on the part of those he considers his social inferiors”; and this is a very good piece of advice, for, if he doesn't do so, he will probably live in a perpetual state of indignation and annoyance, which is quite unnecessary if he adapts himself to his surroundings.

The absence of the courtesy one is accustomed to from carmen, tradespeople, servants, etc., is very noticeable at first; later one becomes accustomed 70 to it, and realizes that it arises not from any desire to be rude or offensive, but from a combination of causes —partly from an honest ignorance of what constitutes good manners, and partly from a perfectly sincere conviction, gravely entertained, that they are really every bit as good as you are, in a country where all social distinctions are supposed to be non-existent. Taken on these terms one will nearly always find these people good-natured and obliging; and however foreign to the traditions of our own country, one soon gets to feel that there

is something fine about this theory of equality among men. Simple and genuine as this feeling is in America, instead of estranging one, it does really seem to bring one nearer to one's fellow-creatures—to those I mean who have been handicapped in life, and haven't had as much money or been as well educated as one has oneself, which, I suppose, is what we mean when we speak of “inferiors.”

This doctrine of equality, though of course it lends itself, as the best things often do, to ridicule or ludicrous satire, is in reality a fine idea, and it lies at the root of all that America once 71 held most sacred when she began the new life a hundred years ago—the theory that every man born in the country should have a fair and equal chance—a better chance than he would have had in the Old World; and it is this spirit that has inspired the whole people since it has existed as a separate nation.

So, after the first few moments of surprise, I quickly got to regard with respect this attitude of the humbler Americans; I saw their point of view so completely. But if one has not taken Baedeker's advice, or, without that philosopher's aid, has failed to prepare oneself for the new condition of things, one is often brought slap up against the democracy in a rather startling manner.

I remember, shortly after my arrival, asking my way of a Boston cabman. The man got down from his box, and, patting me familiarly on the back, said, “Look here, my good man, you walk along there,” etc., pointing in the direction I should go. I could see from his manner that he intended nothing uncivil, nor anything but kindness. It was just one citizen showing the way to 6 72 another, and one soon gets to take this unaccustomed familiarity in good part.

I have met with real rudeness, but not from this class. I think one is more likely to find it among so-called gentle-folk who have migrated from the West and are sensitive in their new surroundings, and generally on the defensive.

I was once introduced to a young woman of this type at the house of a *nouveau-riche* multi-millionaire. “You're an Englishman, aren't you? I don't like Englishmen!” These were the first words with which she greeted me after my formal presentation. “I hope you don't expect me to grovel before you,” she added, amiably; and, having put me perfectly at my ease by these tactful remarks, she proceeded to relate how she had once met another Englishman—some peer's son—at a dance somewhere, and how she had told him that he knew nothing of dancing, and, according to her own account, had been deliberately and systematically discourteous to him the whole evening, simply on the ground of his nationality. At dinner this same lady sent me, through the butler, a miniature flag emblazoned with the stars and 73 stripes, which she requested I would wear. I did so willingly, but felt bewildered at the attitude of hostility displayed towards me by my fair friend, as I was unconscious wherein I had offended. I can only suppose she thought I was likely to prove critical in some way, and chose this method to forestall me. I know examples of this kind are most uncommon, but I mention this because it was in strange contrast to the almost universal courtesy and civility which I met with during my stay in the United States.

Introductions in America are, as a rule, much more cordial affairs than they are with us. One almost invariably shakes hands, and this is accompanied by a form of speech, “I'm very happy to 74 meet you,” which is in notable contrast to our own less demonstrative behaviour on these occasions.

And *how* they talk of money! In snatches of conversation caught in the streets, the restaurants, and the cars, the continual cry is always “dollars—dollars—dollars!” You hear it on all sides perpetually, and money does truly here, as politics in England, seem to be an end in itself, instead of a means to an end.

What is there, one wonders, that these people can possibly gain from the acquisition of money in any way proportionate in their minds to the importance of the process of getting it? Indeed, it does seem as if the lives of most men in America had for their sole aim and

object the making of money. It must be so, or otherwise so many of them would not go on toiling long after they have amassed huge fortunes. It must be the love of the game that keeps them at it; very often it certainly isn't necessity. They seem to have no time left—no ability to enjoy this money when it is made. Again and again one sees or hears of men in the prime of life 75 breaking down in health or dying prematurely, as a direct result of this frantic application to business, and, as an onlooker, one can't help thinking, “Is the game worth the candle?” The women seem better able to cope with the situation, and find no difficulty in spending the money their fathers and husbands have spoiled their lives in acquiring. And, as a rule, the men are content that this should be so. There is something very remarkable, something a bit pathetic, about the attitude of American men to their women-folk. They are so anxious for them to have a “good time”—the good time that they cannot and will not arrange for themselves. Their chivalry and courtesy to women is very pretty, too. Women, as a rule, are tremendously safe with American men, and they know it. When all's said and done, America is the land for women—they are queens of the situation all round. The fact that they have an equal share with their 76 brothers in the division of their parents' property, gives women in America a sense of independence, a right, as it were, to hold up their heads in the land, which may to some extent unconsciously account for their individuality, possibly even for that splendid carriage to which I have already alluded.

Railway travelling in the United States is, as a rule, extremely comfortable, provided always you secure a seat in a Pullman or parlor car beforehand. A journey in an ordinary car is anything but a treat. Here you come rather unpleasantly into close quarters with the democracy, with its component elements of Swedes, Italians, Irish, and negroes, many of them with babies. Of course, a great number of clean Americans travel also in these ordinary cars, but the generous leaven of unwashed foreigner which pervades them, and the fact that the seats are arranged to accommodate only two at a time, and you have absolutely no control as to who the other shall be, renders travelling under these conditions uncomfortable in the extreme. The great advantage which American cars

have over English railway-carriages is that they 77 are all built on the corridor plan, thus effectually rendering crime impossible. The sooner we follow their lead in this respect the better. In America one soon learns to be indifferent to that desire for privacy on railway journeys which is such a characteristic attribute of the Briton when travelling at home.

In the parlor-car, on the other hand, you have a seat to yourself, and there is (for long journeys) an excellent dining-room car attached, as well as a library, smoking, and “observation” car at the end of the train, with a door opening on to the rear platform, very cool and pleasant in summer, facilities for writing, besides very often a stenographer, lady's maid, and hair-dresser in attendance. Shortly before reaching your destination, a servant comes round (a negro nearly always) and brushes your coat and hat, so that you arrive spick and span after the longest and dustiest journey.

The chief drawback to railway travelling is the absence of porters, for which the “checking” system does not really compensate. Indeed, if one wants one's luggage soon after one's arrival, 78 one will do well not to check it farther than the station. If one checks it to the house of one's destination, one may wait hours for it. One may lug one's portmanteau and dressing-case about till one nearly sinks under their weight, and no shadow of a porter to help.

At some stations, notably the New York Central, this deficiency is now being attended to, and there is an admirable supply of porters, polite and attentive.

I may add that the whistles of steam-engines and ferry-boats in America are most pleasant and musical, and compare very favourably with our shrill, ear-piercing whistles at home. The engines also are provided with a huge bell, which is tolled steadily on arriving at stations, and also serves to announce the approach of a train at level crossings, of which there are a criminal number in America.

The rents of houses in New York are ridiculously high, owing largely to the limited space available for building purposes on Manhattan Island. The development of the city is much

handicapped by its geographical situation, for it 79 cannot expand in any direction now, except across the water.

As buildings cannot be extended along the ground, they have to be piled up into the air —twenty-five stories sometimes—or sunk into the earth. There is one case where there are as many as five stories below ground. This is the chief reason and origin of the “sky-scraper.”

The congestion of the traffic is due to the same cause, the entire population, practically, moving backward and forward up and down the island, thus involving a frightful block at certain hours—the “rush” hours, before mentioned, when every one is either going to or returning from his business along the same narrow line.

To cope with this intolerable crush, a subway is being constructed under the streets, hewn out of the solid rock upon which the city is built. It is hoped that when trains are running beneath the surface of the streets, as well as on them and above them, the congested condition of things, as they are at present, will to some extent be relieved. But the population of New York is increasing all the time, while the area of the town 80 remains the same, and calculations have been made that by the time this subway, at present in course of construction, is completed, there will be so many more people travelling that a second subway will be necessary. It has indeed become a very serious question how to control the traffic of New York.

Tunnels under the rivers and additional bridges will do something, I suppose, but meantime the multitudes in the cars and trains have become a menace to public safety.

During the digging out of this subway, the city is in an appalling condition of dirtiness and untidiness, and accidents of one sort or another are of almost daily occurrence.

Explosions resound on all sides—blasting the rock—and vast chasms open beneath one at every turn.

The same haphazard spirit in which the skyscrapers are reared governs the making of this new subway. A few planks are thrown across the yawning gulf beneath, and the ordinary traffic pursues its course over them, strangely indifferent to possibilities of disaster. Indeed New 81 York these days is anything but a safe place to wander about in. What with the pulling down of houses (which is going on to an enormous extent) and these perpetually recurring pits in the earth, the danger to life and limb is multiplied a hundredfold.

While looking down to avoid falling into a hole in the ground one is suddenly arrested by a notice board:

STOP! DANGER ABOVE.

and, looking up, one perhaps beholds the whole side of a house being torn down, and a man hurling old bricks and stones recklessly from the heights above.

The houses of the older sort in New York are all built on the same plan, and most of the side-streets are full of this type of house. They are all about five stories high, counting the ground-floor, 82 which in America is called the first floor. The front door, which is approached by a flight of from ten to twelve steps, consists of two sets of doors—an outer pair, which the visitor himself opens—there to wait the opening of the inner door by the servant.

Upon entering, you find yourself in a narrow hall, opposite a flight of stairs, a blank wall on the right or left. Opposite this blank wall is an open door, leading into the “parlor”; beyond this, rather a gloomy middle room or “back parlor”; and then, always through open doors—the dining-room, at the back.

This is the invariable plan of average New York houses built thirty or forty years ago.

In more modern houses the outside flight of steps is being done away with, and large square halls on the ground-floor introduced—a great improvement.

When making a call, a visitor is rarely announced. Perhaps his card precedes him, if it is in the afternoon, but the name itself is not called out by the servant. In the evening, you simply walk into the parlor, without any preliminary introduction 83 of any sort. But, as I said before, you never can be quite sure what the order of procedure will be upon arriving at a house in New York, owing to the chaotic condition of domestic service.

VI COOKING AND FOOD—FLOWERS—ICED DRINKS—WALDORF-ASTORIA —“PING-PONG”—BRIDGE—CLUBS OF NEW YORK—CENTRAL PARK—BROOKLYN BRIDGE—EAST RIVER—THEATRES—OPERA—TOBACCONISTS' SIGNS.

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VI Cooking and food—Flowers—Iced drinks—Waldorf-Astoria—“Ping-pong”—Bridge—Blubs of New York—Central Park—Brooklyn Bridge—East River—Theatres—Opera—Tobacconists' signs.

THE cooking in America is excellent, a cross between French and English, with an individual touch of its own. I thought they were overfond of smothering their food in white sauces and cream, but that may be an idiosyncrasy of my own. Their oysters are delicious, both “Cape Cods” and “blue points,” and are supplied in great profusion and on comparatively reasonable terms.

I found myself unworthy of clams, a pink, india-rubbery sort of mollusc, but shad is an excellent fish, and possesses a roe which is justly popular. Then there is the terrapin, embarrassing 7 88 by reason of his innumerable tiny bones, but otherwise an admirable beast; the canvasback and ruddy ducks, both a little too rich, I thought; the soft-shelled crabs, broiled and fried, most appetizing. Curiously enough, the turkey, whom we owe originally to America, appears, to my mind, to less advantage on his native soil than he does in the land of his adoption. He is a bit tasteless and insipid over there, and is garnished with a particularly colourless form of stuffing, of which one readily tires. Beef and mutton are neither of them comparable to ours. The grape-fruit is a delightful addition

to the kindly fruits of the earth, and is often served at the very beginning of a meal. It is like the giant offspring of an orange and a lemon, with a very distinct individuality of its own. Apples are also exceptionally fine, and grow in such abundance that the wayfarer is always at liberty to help himself from the orchards that abut on the highroads, and it is never considered pilfering.

Flowers, chiefly raised in hot-houses, have an enormous sale in New York, and fetch preposterous 89 prices. Indeed, they play a very important part in the social life of the city, being constantly sent as tributes of respect or friendship or affection on all possible occasions, and at dinner-parties they are used in decorating the table to an extent unusual with us. Upon the departure of steamers for Europe, too, the display of flowers sent to passengers is extraordinary. One vast trophy I remember seeing, a veritable mountain of roses, sent by some millionaire to a friend sailing for England. It could not possibly have cost less than £100.

“The American Beauty” is the favourite rose, and indeed it is a gorgeous flower, both with regard to form, colour, and scent. Violets are very much the vogue, too, just at present, and they are worn in huge bunches. Yet with all their love of flowers, people seldom have them growing in their windows, and the dreary streets are enlivened by few bright boxes of plants or flowers.

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The peanut is a very favourite article of light and occasional food among the poorer people, and stalls for its sale, presided over by Italians, for the most part, and attracting one's attention by a cheerful little whistling sound, produced by the steam from the apparatus for cooking it, are frequent along the less fashionable thoroughfares.

“Chewing-gum,” which one associates so intimately with America and Americans, is a luxury confined entirely to the lower orders. One sees mumbling jaws and swollen cheeks,

from which one augurs its presence, in tram-cars and other public places, but otherwise one is not likely to come into close contact with it.

Its use by Americans themselves is regarded much as chewing tobacco would be by us. Hence one can understand the amusement of an American young lady of my acquaintance to whom an English hostess gravely apologized one day at dinner for the absence of what she imagined to be a national delicacy. “I'm so very sorry, my dear,” she exclaimed to her fair guest, “but I couldn't get any chewing-gum for you this evening. I 91 tried hard everywhere to get some for you, but nobody kept it!”

In summer very agreeable iced drinks of all descriptions are sold at the drug-stores, most of which have a sort of little bar for their consumption. The druggist also keeps a street directory (not always quite up to date), which any one may consult free of charge—a great convenience. He also, as often as not, sells stamps. And apropos of these, there is a system in the United States post-office which we might copy with advantage. You can buy an “express delivery” stamp, which, affixed to a letter in addition to the ordinary one, will insure the letter's arrival by the first available post, a special messenger being sent on with it at once from the office of its destination. This is a most useful arrangement, especially on Sundays, when, in the ordinary course, you have to wait for your mail till Monday morning. They also sell little books of a dozen stamps or more, interleaved with oil-paper, so that they don't stick together in one's pocket, as they always do if they're put in loose.

Another convenience for the travelling public 92 is the “transfers” which the tram-car companies give you from one line of cars to another. Thus for the same fare, five cents (about 2 *d.*), you can change into several different cars, and so accomplish a devious and complicated journey without additional cost.

The Waldorf-Astoria, to which allusion has already been made, plays such an important part in the daily life of New York—is altogether such a characteristic institution—that any notes on life in America would be incomplete without some reference to it.

It is a huge red-brick pile, about fourteen stories high, with the frontage of a complete “block” on Fifth Avenue—a vast caravanserai, through whose doors pass in the course of the day thousands of men and women of every imaginable type and condition. I suppose a more cosmopolitan or motley crowd could be found in no other hotel upon earth.

There is a large bar-room, devoted to the sale of cocktails, which is frequented, at certain hours of the day, by swarms of brokers, company promoters, touts, loafers, and men of affairs of every 93 sort and kind; while in rows of chairs, arranged in long corridors the whole length of the building, sit men and women all day long—whence coming and whither going who can possibly say?

Close to one of the entrances is a mysterious Moorish Room, dimly lighted by lamps, with settees and ottomans and armchairs, and a vague atmosphere of Oriental luxury about it, differentiating it in a marked way from the more prosaic portions of the hotel without.

Here, in a dim, but perhaps not always religious light, one may discern little ladies in costumes *le dernier cri de demain,* writing mysterious little notes at secluded escritoires; or desolate young men, anxiously awaiting the arrival of some unpunctual fair one, or again, in remote corners, happy couples who have at length achieved a meeting in this trysting-place, and are deep in whispered confidences.

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What histories of comedy and tragedy cannot one devise for oneself during a half-hour spent in that Moorish Room!

Huge dining-saloons, of course, stretch out on all sides, while rows of servants wait about on seats, ready to carry cards to guests through the crowded rooms, bellowing the name of the individual sought through the length and breadth of the building; for finding a friend at the Waldorf is very much like hunting for a needle in a bundle of hay.

It is indeed more like a little town than an hotel. There are thirteen hundred bedrooms alone, and in the season a staff of fifteen hundred servants, with an average of fourteen hundred guests. With the daily floating crowd of visitors, loafers, etc., the inhabitants must amount to considerably over three thousand souls—the population of a village.

A gallery in a gigantic billiard-room is entirely devoted to ping-pong, a game which has had a phenomenal vogue in America during the past year. Even the big clubs corresponding to our Travellers or Oxford and Cambridge have 95 a room set apart for ping-pong, and no private house has been complete without it. However, as a diversion, it has hardly been able to compete with bridge, which, generally referred to as ‘bridge whist,’ still monopolizes the attention of those who haven't much else to do—especially girls and young married women, who are perpetually getting up parties among themselves, starting early in the afternoon and playing on till evening.

There is one long gallery on the ground-floor, where people sit in the afternoon, patiently waiting, one cannot guess what for, and scanning one another with critical interest. It is commonly called “Peacock Row,” or “Rubber-Neck Row”—a “rubber neck” being an eager, craning, busy sort of neck, which is supposed to be possessed to a noticeable extent by the occupants of these chairs.

Of course, there is an orchestra playing at intervals in different places in the building all day long.

A journey through the lower regions, and a glimpse of the thousands of knives and forks and spoons and silver coffee-pots and tea-pots, being 96 cleaned or mended, makes one almost giddy, and certainly fills one with sympathy, tempered by respect, for the moving spirit, whoever it is, that regulates and directs so vast an undertaking.

The clubs of New York are extremely well appointed and luxurious to a degree quite unknown among ourselves. The best of them are supplied with all sorts of comforts, such as an excellent cab service at reasonable rates and a hairdresser's shop.

The hospitality extended to strangers by these clubs is really remarkable. When one considers, by comparison, the niggardly welcome accorded guests by our own London clubs, one feels a bit ashamed. Strangers are readily admitted to temporary membership for periods of a week or more at a time, and thus, provided it is arranged that one's terms should not run concurrently at several clubs, one can insure a continuous membership of some club or other for quite a protracted visit. During my stay in New York I belonged in this way to eleven clubs, which added greatly to my comfort. What *am* I to do for my American hosts when they come to England?

Central Park is a wonderful example of American 97 enterprise in overcoming natural difficulties that must at first have seemed almost insuperable, for it is entirely artificial. Thirty-five years ago the ground which it now occupies was nothing but swamp and rock. To-day it is perhaps the most beautiful park in the world.

How often I have ridden and driven round this enchanting demesne, and how I learned to love it in all the changing seasons of the year—from winter, when the snow lay white upon the sleeping earth and the frost-bound paths crackled invigoratingly beneath one's horses' hoofs, to spring and summer, when cool lakes and waterways gleamed refreshingly among green leaves, and gray squirrels drifted like shadows among the arbours of purple wistaria!

These little fellows make their homes by thousands in the shrubberies and trees of Central Park. No one dreams of hurting them, they are quite tame and will almost feed out of one's hand. The children—to whom Central Park stands in the same relation that Kensington Gardens does to us—love them, and I expect they find life extremely agreeable.

One misses the daisies in the grass—they do not exist in America; and the huge red creature they call a robin bears little resemblance to the bird bearing that familiar name with us.

The actual area of the park must be small—some two and a half miles long by half a mile wide—but owing to the skill with which it has been designed and laid out, it appears immense, and I mean always to think of it as being so. To compare small things with great, our own Zoological Gardens produces a similar impression upon me to this day. As a child I used to wander among the cages and beast houses, along little mysterious paths that led one didn't know whither, through the slightly alarming tunnel, across the little bridge that spans the canal, to the wonderful unknown land beyond, near the parrot house—and to one's childish imagination it all appeared illimitable. I now know that it can cover only a few acres; but I have taken good care in later years never to explore or become unduly familiar with that enchanted ground, and I still think of it as a garden of boundless possibilities and unexpected delights.

And so it is with Central Park. The world would be the duller the day one had investigated the hidden glories of all its winding foot-paths and sylvan glades, and I left it as I found it—a beautiful mystery.

I didn't visit the “Bowery,” about which one hears so much; at least I only drove through it once on the way to a ferry, and had no opportunity of studying its peculiarities, if it still has any. I had friends who used to talk of getting up little parties to go to some cheap restaurant frequented by the proletariat, where there was a vague idea we should have immense fun and “see life,” whatever that meant; but these intentions never took actual form, and I never regretted it, for we have all experienced the questionable pleasure of feeding at a cheap restaurant, and know well the impression of dirty table linen, disgusting victuals, and dyspepsia which such an evening involves all the world over. Let us admit

once for all that there's no real fun in it if you do it when you're not obliged to, and still less when you are.

Brooklyn Bridge, across the East River, is a

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very wonderful construction, of which New Yorkers are justly proud. It connects Manhattan with Brooklyn Borough, and is the biggest suspension bridge in the world—a little over a mile in length. During the rush hours the congestion of traffic on this bridge is appalling, the railways and tramways being crammed with suburban people going to or returning from their work in New York. They are building another bridge farther up the river, which looks equally vast and will be equally wonderful; but I hear that it leads from nowhere to nowhere at present, and that there are no approaches at all to it on the New York side. I have little doubt but that this oversight will be attended to and rectified in time. The East River, over which these mammoth bridges extend, is very interesting higher up. I went a little expedition one day on a Government tug, which took one past the simple houses of old New York, among innumerable islands, nearly all of which seemed to be dedicated to refuges of various forms of sin or suffering. Every time I asked what a building was, they told me, “Oh, that's a lunatic asylum,” or “That's such 101 and such a prison”; and far off I could see mournful little processions of afflicted individuals, waving handkerchiefs to us as we passed.

Somewhere among these islands, deep in the river, is supposed to be sunk the wreck of a British treasure ship, and a syndicate has been formed for its discovery and the acquisition of the treasure. I did not join it.

There are a number of theatres in New York, but I rarely visited them, and when I did so it was usually with a party after dinner at some restaurant, and then the most frivolous musical comedies were selected. I never felt inclined to go alone; and my small experience

of the serious drama in America was not sufficiently encouraging to warrant my fighting against this inclination. Indeed, I thought the standard of plays in New York, both as regards writing and acting, might be raised with advantage. The public are so easily pleased, it is really touching; and there is little good stuff being offered them these days.

With the opera, of course, it is different; and for those who care for this form of entertainment, the very best is provided. Singers of world-wide 102 reputation interpret the principal parts; and the orchestra is in every way equal to the finest we have here or abroad. The house itself presents a very gorgeous spectacle, the boxes being constructed with little balconies, in which the ladies sit with all their prettiest gowns and jewels in the full blaze of the electric light, and it all looks extremely gay and brilliant. Behind these balconies are secluded retreats, usually devoted to cloaks and wraps, and occasionally sought for temporary repose and respite from the music by paterfamilias, whom fashion or the exigencies of family requirements has lured from his comfortable smoking-room in Fifth avenue. Here, with closed doors and in a subdued light, he is enabled during the acts to avoid all distraction from without, and can close his eyes in peace to dream of dollars until the return of the light and 103 the advent of visitors announce the fall of the curtain. My cordial sympathy is with him.

I cannot close this description of the outward appearance of New York without mentioning the signs outside the tobacconists' shops, which are very characteristic, and, I think, peculiar to America. They are usually large figures, representing Indians, shading their eyes with one hand and grasping a bundle of cigars in the other, and looking eagerly out towards the street as though on the track of an enemy. They take the place of the now fast-disappearing Scotchman, who still sometimes stands outside our own tobacconists'.

The Indian is usually painted with silver, and he varies in size and brilliancy according to the prosperity of his master. Sometimes a gentleman wielding a baseball club is substituted in his stead, also glorious in silver.

Hitherto I have confined my observations chiefly to the impressions produced on the English man in the street by the daily incidents of outdoor life, and have in no way touched upon the manners and customs of the richer classes, which form a study in themselves. 8

VII NEW YORK SOCIETY—THE MUCH ADVERTISED 400—EPHEMERAL NATURE OF ITS PERSONNEL—ITS LACK OF DISTINCTION—ITS FRIVOLITY—ITS MANNERS—ITS MORALITY—EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS—DIGNIFIED RICHES.

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VII New York Society—The much advertised 400—Ephemeral nature of its personnel—Its lack of distinction—Its frivolity—Its manners—Its morality—Exceptional individuals—Dignified riches.

SOCIETY in America—why, it doesn't exist!” said a well-known Englishman to me the other day,—and, of course, in our sense of the word, this is more or less true.

Where there is no Court to dispense distinction, regulate custom, or give a special tone and act generally as a rallying-ground for the more favoured individuals of the community (which is practically what “society” means), there can be no criterion for personal qualification, and the prosperous crowd must of necessity become disintegrated and its component parts somewhat 108 accidental. Thus New York is split up into innumerable little sets and factions, some attracting more attention than others, but all equally self-constituted and irresponsible. Moderately wealthy people in America, given the different locale and conditions of life, live much the same existences as moderately wealthy people all the world over—that is to say, they work, and eat, and have their seasons of holiday, and entertain and are entertained—all in a moderately wealthy manner.

But of late years there has grown up in America a sort of aristocracy of great wealth, the outcome of the immense fortunes that have been made in a comparatively short time, which presents an extraordinary spectacle, probably unique in the history of the world.

Without tradition, without officially recognised superior social status in the democracy, the members of this small coterie of extremely rich people which constitutes New York so-called “society,” have arrogated to themselves a position somewhat analogous to our own nobility; and in so doing they have out-heroded Herod.

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The middle classes accept them cheerfully as the best available substitute for the dukes and duchesses whom, in their heart of hearts, the Americans love so well; and the newspapers help to keep up the fiction.

These people are like little kings and queens in the small world which they represent.

You would be surprised to hear the number of totally unknown names which carry weight to-day in the social oligarchy of New York.

Some few of them are familiar figures in our own “smart” London society, others prefer to confine their brilliancy to the illumination of their own social firmament.

A brief sojourn in the United States will do much to remove the old impression that “all Americans are alike.” When one sees the position of superiority displayed by dwellers in the 110 East towards those of the West, when one observes the thousand and one distinctions drawn between each other by the inhabitants of New York alone, one realizes, perhaps for the first time, how impossible is the existence of a society anywhere in this world based upon the equality of man; and how, in a few short years, after all having started fair, some are outdistanced by others in the race, and a society is evolved as full of inequality and snobbishness as any produced by the tyranny of effete civilizations!

The so-called exclusiveness of these good republicans is an amusing spectacle to those accustomed to the well-defined and generally accepted social distinctions of a community governed by monarchical tradition, where a glance at Burke or Debrett will insure beyond

question the right of each individual—at all events, some forty or fifty thousand of them—to his or her exact position in the social hierarchy.

In America, where no such tradition exists, class distinction depends largely upon the caprice of the very wealthy, and resolves itself, as do so many other things in this democracy, into a simple 111 question of dollars. In this respect, of course, English society, for weal or woe, is fast becoming Americanized; but still in England a duke may have an income of no more than £1,000 a year, but “a duke's a duke for a' that.” It is reserved for New York to boast a “society” the component elements of which depend for their position solely upon their banking account.

In speaking of this particular “society”—which might well be spelled with a big $—I allude, of course, to the small set of extremely rich men and women commonly called “millionaires,” “multi-millionaires,” “billionaires,” what you will, and who are variously referred to in the newspapers as the “400,” the “550,” the “620” (they are growing daily), and who by lavish expenditure and general noisiness attract popular attention.

These are the men and women whose restless movements and 112 gusty goings and comings are chronicled by the press of America with a minuteness and fidelity worthy of the court circular.

Their personalities are getting to be tolerably familiar to the masses, and they are recognised in the streets, at the restaurants, and at the opera, and gaped at by less prosperous citizens until they have naturally got to feel that they are really people of very great importance indeed, and gravely consider themselves so.

The newspapers also refer to them as “the smart set.” Each city throughout the length and breadth of the United States produces such a little coterie, of varying degrees of “smartness.” Chicago, of course, has its “smart set,” and Philadelphia and Baltimore.

I believe Pittsburg and Syracuse also have their “smart set.” Kalamazoo, Michigan, is probably growing one at this moment. There is no limit to these “sets” or their “smartness.”

The most prosperous members of the smaller communities usually gravitate to New York to swell the “smart set” there. They begin tentatively at Lenox or Bar Harbor or other fashionable 113 summer resorts, and, if they find they are welcome there, they brace themselves up for further efforts in the metropolis itself, and eventually in Newport, the ultimate goal of the socially ambitious.

With the rapid growth of the country and the constant recruiting of its ranks from among the richest inhabitants of the Western cities, this limited “society” is constantly changing, and those who, a few years ago, were at the top of the tree find themselves to-day “outclassed,” so to speak, by some one with more abundant store of this world's goods, who, in his turn, will have to give way to some mightier Crœsus in days to come.

Thus there is a perpetual shifting of the *personnel* of the socially very elect, and many of those bearing names most conspicuous in New York a quarter of a century ago, finding themselves left behind to-day and unable longer to compete with their wealthier rivals in the race for social supremacy, have contented themselves by dropping quietly out of the contest, still perhaps retaining their old home, now stranded in some 114 hopelessly unfashionable quarter of Vanity Fair, whence, dwelling in comparative oblivion, they watch the rise and fall of other generations of very rich men. And so the story goes on. There being no law of primogeniture in America, and all the sons and daughters sharing their parents' fortune in equal proportions, the great estates soon diminish, if families are large, and to this cause may be attributed the constant change of residence, few sons living in their father's houses, and many fathers scarcely having had houses themselves to live in. Thus, if fortunes are to be continued in families, it necessitates, after two or three generations, a return to laborious days, and “from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves” is a saying which briefly comprises the history of many an American family. Of course, a glorious period of prosperity may intervene between these two extremes.

It is instructive to watch the eagerness with which members of this mushroom “society,” who have already “arrived,” and who are experiencing for the first time in their lives the sweets of the power to snub, try to exclude other aspirants, 115 perhaps their personal friends of a few years ago, from the charmed circle.

Of course, there are yearly consignments of such climbers attempting to storm the social citadel, which the little band of the besieged holds desperately against all comers. If the purses of the attacking forces are long enough they usually achieve their object.

The tenacity with which the ultra-fashionables cling together has given American “society,” in America, a reputation for exclusiveness which is interesting to contemplate in view of the personalities of most of the excluders. It is all so like a burlesque of our own London “Society.” There are *grandes dames* without dignity or repose, fashionable young men without distinction; and it is all very natural that this should be so in a “society” which has been playing the game so very short a time.

There is a story told of how twenty years ago a big ball was given in New York by some people whose children are to-day among the acknowledged social leaders in the city. The “smart set” of the time being, or those who 116 corresponded to it (for the silly word hadn't been invented then), debated as to whether they should attend it or not. A few ladies ventured to appear *déçolleté* , a new departure in evening toilet in America in those days. A butler met one of these in a passage, and asked her whether she was looking for the bathroom! But this was twenty years ago. American “society” has made strides since then; but it will have to advance considerably in matters more subtle and intangible than anything connected with details of dress if it is to challenge comparison on equal terms with the great aristocracies of Europe; for it must be confessed, when all's said and done, that there is at present something hopelessly middle class and *bourgeois* about American “smart” society.

Very few of these ladies seem at all sure of their position, and it is partly for this reason, no doubt, that they are so troubled at the idea of any of their friends visiting or entertaining other ladies in the city who do not happen to belong to their own particular little coterie.

This attitude strikes one as being very provincial. 117 At a dinner-party one evening I happened to mention that I had called on a particular lady who had apparently not yet been welcomed into the magic circle. If she isn't there now she will be in a year or two, for she is immensely rich. My hostess was quite indignant, and said that she had told another man, who had committed a similar indiscretion in the same quarter, that if he continued to visit at this house he need not come to see her any more; in short, that he must choose between the prosperous pariah and herself. Hostesses on this side of the Atlantic, outside county towns and villages, do not dictate to their guests whom they may or may not visit.

The chief fault to be found with these people— 118 the very rich ones, I mean, who owe their conspicuous position solely to their wealth and to no other cause whatever—is their extreme frivolity. There seems to be no serious basis of life for them at all, and amusement and pleasure are the sole aims of their existence. Of course, this is more or less the case in any society where great wealth and much leisure abound, but I think it is even more noticeable in this little New York coterie than among our own leisured classes, where, at least, they have politics to fall back upon.

Unless they are individually gifted in some way, which is not always the case, these people (and I am speaking chiefly of the women now) seem to have no resources whatever, for politics, as they do in England, form no part of the social programme.

The halo of importance which surrounds the heads of our own politicians in England has no counterpart in America, where few politicians are in “society” at all, and the few that are owe their status to some accident unconnected with their calling. No one dreams of talking politics at a 119 “smart” New York dinner-party, and while this is, in a sense, a relief from the altogether disproportionate amount of attention accorded to the subject in England

upon these and all other occasions, yet the almost entire absence of any serious thought (art and literature being equally foreign to the genius of a “society” in which bridge claims most of the hours not devoted to the toilet) has a tendency to render conversation trivial and elementary to a degree.

The manners of these people in public still leave something to be desired. At the opera, for instance, there is a pretty continuous flow of conversation in the parterre boxes during the entire performance; and this goes on steadily, irrespective of the music or the artists on the stage. Indeed, the opera in New York has become, for this particular set, little else than a social occasion, for the meeting of friends and talking; and one of them admitted to me that she was always anxious for the opera to come to an end, that she might get away to supper at Sherry's.

I share her opinion in the main, having always considered opera a tiresome and somewhat comic 9 120 form of entertainment; but if one goes to it, I suppose one shouldn't talk too loud during the performance, out of consideration for the singers and such of one's neighbours among the audience who like to listen to the music.

Indeed, they are like spoiled children, surfeited with excitement, yet always hungering for more; and there is something pathetic about the incessant unrest of them—the wandering eye and intermittent attention, the perpetual craving fresh amusement, which, like a “Fata Morgana” or “Will-o'-the-Wisp,” seems eternally to evade the grasp of the pursuer.

One charming lady, most richly dowered with this world's goods, bearing a name now universally recognised as a synonym for fabulous wealth, confessed to me that, quite honestly, if she had been given the chance, she would rather never have been born, she had had so much more unhappiness than happiness in this life; and this was a woman who had had everything this world has to give of wealth and position, and who would without doubt be envied by millions of her less favoured sisters throughout the length and

breadth 121 of the land. Which all points to the commonplace conclusion as to how little material luxury contributes to real happiness in life.

Much has been said and written about the lax morality of these pampered children of fortune, but I think unfairly.

The accusations have been made by clergymen and cranks, who had no first-hand knowledge of their subject; and in so doing they have greatly exaggerated the real state of things. Take them all in all, I imagine, as a class, that, morally speaking, they are neither better nor worse than other Americans. Divorce is tolerably popular with them—but so it is everywhere in America. There is no country on the face of the earth, I suppose, where divorce is so easily or so frequently obtained. There are at this moment (April, 1903) 51,538 divorced people in the United States, and thus supposing the entire “400” were legally separated from each other, it would be a very small proportion in the whole community.

My own observations would point to the fact that, child-like, they are fascinated by the idea of playing at being naughty and shocking people; 122 but that in reality they are for the most part excellent citizens, at least averagely decently behaved in their family relations, and that though they may be foolish enough to like to pose as “gay dogs,” “devils of fellows,” and “wayward wives,” yet in reality, to borrow again one of their own phrases, “there's nothing doing.” And the worst that can be said of them morally is that their lives are very empty and very wasted, and don't seem to bring them much happiness “at that” (I quote them again). But as they might well retort, “that's nobody else's affair”—nor is it.

“Ex uno disce omnes” is an aphorism which it would be manifestly unfair to insist upon when discussing these brilliant but irresponsible butterflies. If some of them fall short of certain standards of good breeding—if there are frivolous old ladies and egregious young men, who, in their mad pursuit of pleasure, seem to afford to their more serious fellow-countrymen a somewhat unedifying spectacle, there are others who would be welcome

in any society—charming, clever men and women, who seem by some mistake to have intellectually drifted down-stairs, and one couldn't 123 help wondering what they were doing *dans cette galère,* or what, in their heart of hearts, they were thinking of the empty show around them, so clearly were they intended for better things. But the golden dust had got into their eyes, too, and their vision was obscured; and besides, their presence was hardly frequent enough to act as a noticeable leaven upon the heavy mass in which they were imbedded; so, after all, I must mention them as exceptions which serve to prove the rule.

In dignified contrast to this noisy little band, to whose doings so much publicity is given, there are men, also possessing vast fortunes and influence sufficient to throw Wall Street into a fever by the stroke of their pen, were they so minded, to whom the frivolous and useless lives of the more advertised members of “society” present no attraction whatever, and who deliberately, and of choice, abstain from mingling in that giddy throng.

Such men, of whom the late Abram S. Hewitt was an honourable type, belong to a class altogether apart.

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Their names rarely appear in the newspapers—their personalities are almost unknown in the highways of “Vanity Fair”—and they prefer that this should be so. But they wield an immense power, and to them the silent knowledge of this is preferable to the vulgar display of it in public ostentation. These giants of finance as a rule lead retired lives—their wives and daughters not infrequently share their indifference to worldly display and notoriety, and pass their days following their own pursuits, administering charities, cultivating their minds—the very best examples of all that is best in the aristocracy of wealth in America.

VIII NEW YORK DINNER-PARTIES—NEWPORT—BELLEVUE AVENUE—OBSESSION OF WEALTH—LAWN-TENNIS—BAILEY'S BEACH—LUNCHES—

DINNERS—“MUSICALES”—BALLS—REMARKABLE PARTY AT NEWPORT —“CLAMBAKES”—“A MATTER OF BUSINESS!”

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VIII New York dinner-parties—Newport—Bellevue Avenue—Obsession of wealth—Lawn-tennis—Bailey's Beach—Lunches—Dinners—“Musicales”—Balls—Remarkable party at Newport—“Clambakes”—“A matter of business!”

DURING the winter months—November to March—New York is the scene of incessant dinner-parties, opera-parties, supper-parties, and dances, at which the earnest seekers after pleasure work in manful fashion and with a devotion worthy of the cause.

Two customs may perhaps here be noted, which prevail at a New York dinner-party, but which are unusual with us. Upon arriving one finds a tray in the hall, upon which are a number of diminutive envelopes, addressed with the names of 128 the men guests. One selects one's own from among them, and, on opening it, finds written upon a little card the name of the lady whom one is to “take out” to dinner. When dinner is over, and the ladies are about to retire, it is customary for the men to offer their arms again, and conduct them *out* of the dining-room back to the drawing-room—as they do in France—and having deposited their fair charges in safety, to return to the dining or smoking room for coffee and cigars.

In February they retire temporarily to Palm Beach (a subtropical watering-place in southern Florida), or Hot Springs, or Europe, for a change of scene. The festivities continue all the time. In July and August they meet again in strength at that Mecca of American elegance and fashion, Newport.

And what can I write that is new of this amazing summer play-ground? It has been so often described—yet it, too, like all things American, is undergoing such rapid changes that the

impression which this stronghold of “Vanity Fair” produced upon an English pilgrim in the summer of 1902 may not be altogether unworthy of record.

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Newport is certainly a favoured spot, geographically speaking. Situated on the southwest extremity of Rhode Island, it has a delicious, if somewhat relaxing climate, rather like that of Devonshire.

The drives and walks about the cliffs are extremely beautiful, and always below stretches out the vast expanse of the blue Atlantic. Yet the beauties of nature seem almost overwhelmed and eclipsed by the personality of man—and woman, especially woman. As I said, the crowd that has been seeking diversion in two hemispheres, since the end of the New York season, meets once more in Bellevue Avenue—a long road, terminating at the ocean, and fringed at brief distances throughout its length with the “Seats of the Mighty.” Here Dives has built his lordliest palaces, called, in perhaps excess of modesty, “cottages”—mansions, which in England would demand a circumference of a hundred acres of park, but which here, in deference to the gregarious instincts of the American, are built in close juxtaposition to one another, upon small inclosures which would scarcely satisfy the ambitions 130 of the tenant of a Clapham villa. A million dollars have been spent upon the building of most of these palaces—many have cost much more.

I suppose such another avenue, representing so much wealth and financial prosperity, does not exist in the world.

The rich men of England live in houses dispersed throughout the country, each the centre of a village or number of villages, the lord of a thousand tenants. Nothing of this kind exists in America, where, as I said before, few sons live in their fathers' houses and many a father scarcely had a house for a son to live in.

Country estates are becoming commoner in America now than they ever have been, and many of the men who own “cottages” at Newport possess also houses in more isolated

positions throughout the country. But the instinct of the socially ambitious American man of business when he has “made his pile” is to build or rent a house at Newport as near as possible to some friend or acquaintance who has managed to get there before him. Here the wealthiest in the land 131 herd together. A few yards separate these gorgeous abodes from each other—and that is all; but their tenants seem content that this should be so, for peace and privacy form no part of these people's programme.

Bellevue Avenue is like a sort of glorified Kensington Palace Gardens. In the rush and hurry of the lives which have amassed the fortunes the possession of which these houses represent, it is easy to understand that there has been little time left to devote to the cultivation of the arts in any form, and the houses themselves proclaim this. A blank cheque and a fashionable builder have, as a rule, been the authors of their being; and little or no individual taste of the owner has been exercised in their construction or adornment. I have at this moment the vaguest impression 132 of the interior of any one of them apart from another. The same Louis XV ornamentation, the same profusion of gilding, the same dealers' pictures—some of them more gorgeous than others, all equally devoid of any touch which might betray the personality of their master. And this is surely natural enough under the circumstances. The palaces of Newport are, in truth, just what you would expect the palaces of Newport to be: they are very costly, very sumptuous, often very ugly; but they admirably fulfil what, I take it, is one of their chief *raisons d'etre* —they are the material and visible expression of the possession of vast riches.

Two examples I came across in America (but not in Newport) where great judgment and individual taste have been displayed in the construction of houses and the collection of works of art which they contain. One of these is the Venetian palace of Mrs. John Gardner, on the outskirts of Boston; the other is Mr. Widener's house near Philadelphia. I shall refer to both later on. Of course there must be many others, but I did not come across them.

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All day long, up and down Bellevue Avenue, in aimless procession, passes a stream of brilliantly appointed carriages—victorias, landaus, automobiles—filled with fair damsels in daintiest Parisian costumes, and ‘elegant’ youths.

On the balcony of the Casino Club half a dozen young men lounge listlessly, watching the passing cavalcade, now and then recognising a fair acquaintance as she whirls past in her carriage or ‘auto’ or electric cab, or alights for a moment to deliver a little card of invitation for luncheon or ball or ‘musicale.’

A little awestruck crowd of humbler citizens (chiefly female) congregates opposite the club entrance—one knows its prototype in London, outside Marlborough House—for at any moment may not one of the great dames of the republic—Mrs. 134 Brown, Mrs. Jones, or Mrs. Robinson, familiar by name, at least, to every reader of the New York journals—appear in the flesh and brighten for a few brilliant moments the monotony of the democratic horizon?

The mornings are chiefly occupied by tennis in the Casino Gardens; and here one sees the American ‘society’ girl at her very best—fresh, happy, vigorous, and oh, so young, and in most becoming garments. The elder ladies, who take no active part in the game, put in an appearance about midday, clad as for a gorgeous garden-party. They all seem to know each other, and to have a thousand confidences and arrangements to make about future gaieties. It is very much like being plumped down into the middle of a huge family party. After this there is a general move to Bailey's Beach—perhaps the most exclusive, as it is certainly one of the most beautiful bathing places in the world. The bathing-boxes are subscribed for entirely by private individuals, and the beach is understood to be reserved only for such subscribers and their friends.

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The little waves come rolling in over a long stretch of sandy beach; the cool summer breezes just freshen the heat of the sun. A hundred yards out is a floating platform, upon

which the bathers, men and women, the latter in the most dainty and beguiling costumes ever devised for the undoing of man, disport themselves in the sunshine.

The picture of two lovely sirens in red silk costumes and stockings and hats to match with whom I leaped and pranced among the breakers, renewing in imagination for a few brief moments my far-off youth, is indelibly imprinted upon my memory, and I wonder, as I sit here, so many thousand miles away, that I have carried back with me across that same sea a heart that can in any sense be described as whole, or even partially so.

Then follow lunch-parties galore among the “cottagers” and their friends, and in the afternoon endless drives again and leavings of cards, and then tea, and then dinner-parties, and then concerts, or “vaudevilles” or “musicales” or balls. And this, the programme of one day, will serve, with slight changes, for all days. 10

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And the balls of Newport—how can I describe them?

I think they gave one an impression of more reckless expenditure than one ever remembers receiving at any entertainment, even the most gorgeous, among our own people. As a pageant, of course, they cannot compare with smart London balls, the lack of distinction among the guests depriving them of the indescribable brilliancy of similar functions in England; but they fill one with a sense of unlimited expense, which is never so aggressively present in Mayfair.

Somehow, in these frantically new houses, this becomes almost an obsession. “How *much* this must have cost!” is the first thought that strikes one, as one casts one's eyes upon the lavish profusion of American Beauty roses and the priceless cotillon favours, or seeks rest for a moment in marble corridors from the two great orchestras, that make continuous music through the long summer nights—for no Newport ball is possible without *two* bands, one to begin the moment the other stops, so that there may be no cessation of dancing, even while the musicians 137 rest. Were this encouraged, the fickle crowd might

suddenly lose interest, and refuse to return to the ball-room. So dance follows dance, without intermission, until all simultaneously retire to supper, after which a cotillon usually takes place.

One entertainment in especial has impressed itself upon my memory—chiefly, perhaps, because of the huge expense which it must have involved.

The party started, I remember, at eleven o'clock, with a “Midway”—a long gallery, brilliantly lighted with electric lamps, built out from the house. From this branched out on either side a number of recesses, each devoted to some side-show—a shooting-gallery, Punch and Judy, gipsy fortune-teller, coloured minstrels, dancing-girls, lotteries, etc.—in short, all the attractions of a princely fair.

Here the guests assembled—to quote from the local Newport Herald: “All the guests entered into the spirit of the affair, and it was a round of pleasure, from start to finish, and a brilliant spectacle indeed, and the merry voices and the laughter of the ladies especially told how funny everything was.”

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After amusing ourselves for a time with these diversions, we were ushered, at midnight, into a huge extempore theatre, upon which an army of workmen had been employed for weeks previously. Here, amid the most sumptuous surroundings, in a bower of roses and seated upon gilded chairs, we witnessed a performance given by a light opera company (corresponding to our Gaiety), of which the principals, chorus, and orchestra had been specially imported for the evening, at one doesn't like to think what cost, from New York. The theatre in town was, of course, closed for the night. The chief event in the performance was the singing of a popular song, Nancy Brown, by a lady of the company who had originally made a “hit” with it, but was at the time supposed to be taking her summer 139 holiday. Her presence on this occasion was secured, however (for a consideration), and this made all complete. I have forgotten how many times the

great song was encored; however, at each encore the audience joined boisterously in the chorus, and when at the end the host himself, bashful, yet determined, struggled to the footlights, half hidden in a colossal nosegay of roses, which he had brought to lay at the feet of the popular prima donna, our enthusiasm knew no bounds.

After the entertainment a wonderful supper was served at numberless little round tables, and during this repast legions of workmen were busy transforming the auditorium of the theatre into a ballroom, to which the guests returned, sated and bewildered, and some of them a bit tired, too. The favours for the cotillon were brought in and the first 140 orchestra struck up for a brilliant ball when I retired from the scene at three o'clock A. M. I heard that it was continued till seven o'clock, when those who endured to the end played lawn-tennis.

Of course an evening of this description, so congested with good things—there was enough entertainment offered to have sufficed for three or four ordinary parties—was an exceptional affair, and was much talked and written about at the time; but it seemed to raise the standard, and next season some hostess will have to go “one better”—squeeze in an additional “stunt” or spend a few more thousand dollars—if she is to give a party to surpass this, and some one will probably try; for there is a perpetual friendly rivalry among these unflagging hostesses, 141 and a continual effort to secure some fresh or unexpected attraction for their entertainments, which becomes the object of existence in Newport during the summer months.

While at Newport I was a guest at a “clambake” one day—a form of entertainment which I think possesses few attractions, owing chiefly to the extremely undesirable form of refreshment offered one at its conclusion. It is a sort of picnic to a more or less remote region, the party on arrival feeding on clams (baked in seaweed), lobsters, as far as I can remember, Indian corn and sweet potatoes. During this repast negroes and negresses dance and sing, speeches are made, and the company adjourns. On this occasion we observed all the customary rules and regulations. Our party, which was a large one, started out on a coach-and-four and an automobile or two. It was a very beautiful drive,

and if clams and sweet potatoes hadn't awaited one at the end would have left nothing but agreeable memories afterward.

We put up at a rustic inn, in a sort of outhouse of which the dread repast to which I have referred was duly spread.

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It was clearly a tavern accustomed to “clambakes,” for in a yard close by there were all the paraphernalia essential for cooking the horrible clams in their seaweed. We managed to be very jolly, however, in spite of circumstances, and when speech time came and I was called upon for a few words, I so far forgot my antipathy to it as to return thanks on behalf of the “mute, inglorious clam,” which could not speak up for itself.

One morning, towards the end of my visit, after a more than usually tempestuous evening, spent at a particularly magnificent ball, I felt extremely unwell. As the day proceeded my symptoms of discomfort increased, and I persuaded myself that it was quite conceivable that I might die.

Anxious for sympathy and consolation under these distressing Circumstances, I rang the bell for my landlord—usually a most amiable and obliging gentleman, and addressed him as follows: “Good morning, Mr. Carter, I'm not feeling at all well to-day.” And then, after a pause, “Do you know, I think it's quite possible I may die here.” No reply. Then, in a pathetic offhand 143 voice, intended to arouse much sympathy: “I'm afraid it will be very tiresome for you, Mr. Carter, and give you a lot of trouble if I do.”

The reply now came. “Oh, that'll be quite right, sir, it'll all be a matter of business!” In other words, my death would, like all other things, be reduced to a question of dollars!

This answer roused me from the acute attack of hypochondria from which I was suffering, and did more to bring me to my senses than a dozen doctors and all the drug-stores in the

town. From that moment I resolutely determined not to die in Newport if I could possibly prevent it.

IX NEW FRIENDS—COMMISSION FOR A PORTRAIT—ITALIAN COUNT—BRAVERY OF AMERICAN WIVES—EXTRAORDINARY HOSPITALITY OF AMERICANS.

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IX New friends—Commission for a portrait—Italian count—Bravery of American wives—Extraordinary hospitality of Americans.

IT was at Newport that I made the acquaintance of a most charming lady and her husband, a Mr. and Mrs. L., whose guest I became more than once later on, and whose exceptional kindness and hospitality stood out in vivid relief even in a land where hospitality and kindness were so much the general rule. In connection with this matter I incidentally became the witness of a drama, the details and development of which might have originated in the brain of a novelist—I think it would have been impossible anywhere else but in America.

Before, however, I touch on this story, I must tell how I first became acquainted with my hostess and her husband.

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I was sitting alone one evening shortly after my arrival at dinner in the restaurant of the Casino, when I looked up and saw a small party of four—two ladies and two men—who were also dining at a table not very far off. I thought one of the men looked as though he knew me, and while I was wondering whether this could be so, he rose and advanced towards me, at the same time stretching out his hand. He was obviously an acquaintance, though I could not at the moment recall his personality; so I got up and we shook hands, and then all at once I remembered where I had met him. It had been in the baccarat room of the Villa des Fleurs at Aixles-Bains, where, about a year previously, I remembered I had seen him and his wife rather in difficulties about the rules of the game. I had shown

them how to stake their money and they had politely professed gratitude. Whether they ultimately had cause for this feeling or not I never stopped to inquire. I had roughly instructed them in the rudiments of the game, and there my responsibility ceased.

Well, this was my friend of the Villa des Fleurs, 149 and a little way off, sat his wife, whom I recognised and saluted. He expressed a wish that I should later on join the party at his table, when he said he should like to introduce me to Mr. and Mrs. L., my future host and his wife, with whom he was dining. I said I should be delighted, and accordingly, when I'd finished dinner, I walked across to the other table and was duly presented to my new friends. Unexpected things began happening almost at once; and here any painter will agree with me that what I am going to relate was *most* unexpected, or at all events, unusual. I had not been introduced to Mrs. L. more than five minutes when she suddenly asked me, “And do you paint portraits?” I humbly replied that I tried to. Whereupon, without a moment's hesitation, she exclaimed, “I should like you to paint my husband.” I was a little bit startled at the suddenness of the request, but very much pleased all the same. Wasn't this what I had partly come out to America for? and hadn't I secretly hoped that every one I met would have a similar request to make? So far the people I had come across had shown a wonderful 150 control over any desire they might secretly cherish to possess a portrait by me; but at last I was going to be appreciated and was coming into my own.

To be sure, the kind lady who had just made this flattering suggestion to me knew nothing of my style or capabilities, and I had inward qualms lest these should eventually not prove to her liking, but for the time being all was well with me. Not so, altogether, with the husband, who, I could see, viewed with some apprehension the unexpected turn affairs had taken. Of course he didn't want to sit for his portrait—what man does?—and then, here was a complete stranger, about whom he knew nothing, who had been practically commissioned before his very eyes to undertake the tiresome business. All my sympathies were with the husband. It was finally agreed upon that I should call the next day at the hotel where my new friends were all staying and make final arrangements about the portrait. So on the morrow I went to the address given, and with the wife of my Villa des

Fleurs friend as a go-between, settled all details of price and venue 151 with Mrs. L., and it was agreed that, upon leaving Newport, I should join them at their own house and begin the portrait.

And all this was arranged without seriously consulting the chief actor, who apparently had agreed to accept the situation and undergo the ordeal of sitting for his portrait, if by so doing he would in any way give pleasure to his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached. I believe he would have done anything to please her, and he was, without exception, the most perfect example I ever came across of the good and devoted American husband.

Stopping at the same hotel with my friends was an Italian count, a man in the prime of life—tall, well-bred, good-looking, but sad and depressed beyond all measure. He rarely left the hotel grounds, seemed to know nobody in Newport, and spent his days in walking drearily about or playing little melancholy melodies upon the hotel piano. It was clear he was not a happy count.

One day Mrs. L. told me that she had made the acquaintance of the count, and that he had more or less confided to her the story of his life. 11

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Kind Mrs. L., without consulting her husband (and herein I appreciated the extraordinary bravery of the American wife), offered the count a position as tutor to her little boy, which the count promptly declined. It was then suggested that he should return home with Mr. and Mrs. L. as their guest, and this was more to the count's mind. Accordingly, when I visited my friends, in September, to paint the portrait, I found the count comfortably ensconced, an honoured guest, in the most luxurious surroundings, driving his host's horses, practising his agreeable little tunes upon the piano, and, generally speaking, very much at home.

He was a “fatalist” by nature or stress of circumstances, and believed that whatever would be would be. This comfortable faith, of course, denied the necessity for personal effort of

any kind, and when I suggested that life should possibly entail something more than sitting still with one's mouth open for an apple to drop into it, the count cordially disagreed.

“It was written” was a favourite oracular expression of his, and in his case, indeed, the theory 153 seemed to work excellently well, for it did indeed appear that it had been written and decreed that his lot should, at all events in America, fall in soft places.

I completed the portrait, and the ordeal, I am glad to say, proved much less unbearable to my friend than he had at first anticipated. Indeed, I think he was half sorry when it was finished. During my entire visit I was the recipient of the most unbounded hospitality and left with my hands full of presents, besides a thousand and one delicate and graceful attentions, tangible and intangible, on the part of my fascinating hostess and her husband. There was no limit to their liberality. It sometimes became almost embarrassing, as when I once went to buy some colours in the town and, having completed my purchases, asked for the bill. “There's nothing to pay,” replied the shop-keeper; “Mrs. L. has just telephoned down that anything you buy is to be put down to her account.” In vain I expostulated—the shopman was under orders, and would not listen to any words on the subject.

On another occasion, when I was leaving by 154 train, Mr. L. saw me to the station. The English tutor had been despatched earlier in the day to secure my ticket. When I went to the ticket-office and offered to pay, the clerk shook his head. “That's all settled,” he remarked, smiling at Mr. L. This was really too much, and I sought to repay the very considerable amount which my host had expended in my behalf, but with no better result than I had before with the shopman. He absolutely refused to take my money, and, not wishing to make a protracted scene on the occasion, I dropped the matter.

Indeed, philanthropy was a passion with this delicate little lady, whose whole life seemed devoted to making the lives of other people happier and brighter.

There was one son—a boy of fifteen—a typical example of American boyhood. In England he would have been thought precocious, but among his own people he somehow took his

place naturally enough, joining readily in the conversation at dinner-time, and holding his own on all occasions, after the manner of American children.

The days spent under this hospitable roof 155 passed most happily. The mornings were occupied with work, and in the afternoons we went driving into the country, which was very beautiful. The absence of walls or hedges was noticeable. Constantly one would pass a whole row of front gardens next each other with no sort of division between themselves or the public highway. It gave an open, rather cheerful appearance to the streets, but involved an amount of confidence in one's neighbour and indifference to privacy which I think are lacking with us in England. We reached home in time for tea, which Lion and Spot, an attractive collie and clever fox terrier, usually attended, and went through tricks which had been taught them with unending patience by the English tutor. I think this was his chief duty.

Then came dinner, after which we had readings aloud, usually from Dickens, and many a pleasant game of pool, or, under pretence of amusing the boy (but really for our own entertainment) sent up innumerable fire-balloons into the darkness of the autumn night, watching with never-wearying satisfaction the transparent globes of fire rise in the still darkness, until some side-current 156 of wind in the upper air would catch them and speed them away to unknown heights and distances—tiny specks among the stars. Those were pleasant days and evenings, and the count added much to their enjoyment. His gentle, melancholy presence in the house was very agreeable—and he could talk most interestingly when he chose, for he had travelled much and seen many lands and known many men—and when the day came for me to say good-bye, I did so with sincere regret.

Later on I returned, more than once, and renewed my acquaintance with this remarkable family. I always found life going on with the same regularity that I remembered on my first visit, and the household quite unchanged—Mr. and Mrs. L., their son, the English tutor, the count (now apparently a permanent fixture), Lion and Spot, and Thompson, the negro footman (whom I forgot to mention before). And apropos of Thompson, I shall

never forget my agony one morning while I was painting the portrait, when I entered the studio and found to my consternation that the easel was empty, and that the unfinished 157 painting had disappeared. I hardly know what wild thoughts first came to me—among other things I had a vision of my hostess entering the room in my absence and, being dissatisfied with the likeness, destroying the canvas there and then. How deeply I had wronged her I learned a few moments later, when in my desperate search through the house, I came across the negro aimlessly carrying about my lost masterpiece and looking for a place in the billiard-room to hang it up in—wet and unframed and unfinished as it was! He had mistaken some order given him by his mistress with regard to 158 another painting, and was, as he thought, innocently doing his duty. Another time at breakfast one morning, Thompson urged me to take shares in a company for rebuilding a Baptist church somewhere that he was interested in. I understood that the investment would be on commercial lines, and that I should lose nothing by the transaction. I accordingly purchased one share—which was the least I could honourably do—and was duly presented by my dusky friend with a receipt. Upon examining it, I found the following quaint inscription:

“This certifies that I have purchased one share in the—Baptist Church, issued for the purpose of enlarging the building. Dividends and principal will be paid in heaven.”

After I had returned to New York, I gathered from various signs that life at the L.s was not going on perhaps quite as smoothly as it once had done. The count had taken to studying thorough-base, and was also devoting much time to learning the organ, with vague ideas of one day becoming an organist, but he was showing no signs of bringing his visit to an end, and, as may 159 be imagined, relations were occasionally beginning to become a bit strained. The troubles of her guest reacted upon his hostess, and though Mr. L. bore up with fortitude, I could see that the strain was beginning to tell upon his more sensitive wife. Once I met them both—at the Waldorf-Astoria—having come up for a matinee at the opera, for change of scene and surroundings.

I asked Mrs. L. whether there was any chance of my seeing her in Europe. “Well, we aren't quite sure about our plans this summer. You see, while the count is staying with us, it makes it rather difficult to move!” He had then been their guest for nearly eight months, and, as far as I know, he is so still.

I have told this story as an example of the extraordinary hospitality of Americans. I think it would be difficult to match it over here.

X WASHINGTON—NEGROES—MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURE—THE PRESIDENT—AMERICAN POLITICS—NOT SOCIALLY PROMINENT—CELEBRATING THE “DEFEAT OF THE BRITIS”—“BUNKER HILL”—FOURTH OF JULY—BATTLE OF “STONY POINT”—AMERICAN LANGUAGE—SLANG—AN “ENGLISH ACCENT.”

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X Washington—Negroes—Members of legislature—The President—American politics—Politicians not socially prominent—Celebrating the “defeat of the British”“Bunker Hill”—Fourth of July—Battle of “Stony Point”—American language—Slang—An “English accent.”

TWO flying visits to Washington gave me a glimpse of the beautiful city—the capital of the country—and an impression, but nothing more than an impression, of what its life was like.

After the rush of New York, Washington appeared to me like what I imagine Bagdad, “the abode of peace,” to be—but Bagdad without a railway. The tram-cars didn't travel so furiously, the men and women urged their careers less frantically, there was an atmosphere of rest and quiet. It seemed to me that social life in Washington 164 was extremely agreeable, the cosmopolitan nature of its inhabitants giving it a character quite apart from that of other cities in America. They seemed to spend a rather disproportionate amount of time and energy, I thought, in paying calls. After a few days, an impression of incessant leaving and receiving of cards remained with me—a social tax which it struck one it must be somewhat irksome to pay. But the sense of peace remained, all the same.

The Capitol is a very fine building, and it was interesting to set eyes on the famous White House, though the briefness of my visit prevented my attending a party there and seeing its interior. I missed also a meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which I rather regret now. However, one got a very fair idea of the outward appearance of the city, which is certainly most attractive, though far from complete. I believe there exist plans of the city, drawn out by its original designer, a French officer of engineers, which it is intended gradually to carry out, when it is expected that Washington will be one of the very finest cities of the modern world.

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One notices the great number of negroes in the streets—their proportion to the white population increasing, I suppose, as you go farther South. I confess I didn't like them—but then what is one to do? There they are, and the situation has to be faced; and after all, it was worse for the Americans than for me, because I could so easily leave them. When aversion to a race is instinctive and deep-seated, it's a bit difficult to write quite fairly on the subject. In spite of all that is spoken and written about the “brotherhood of man” and the arguments that race and colour should be no bar to men enjoying equal rights and privileges—in practice I don't see how this theory is to work in the United States. There's no doubt about it, the negro is not, and can never be, the equal of his white brother. He *does* belong to an inferior race, and there's no getting over it. It may be regrettable that this should be so, but so it surely is.

Mr. Booker T. Washington, the great champion of the negro cause in America, and one of their cleverest representatives, is himself in part white. The pure negro has never developed in 166 any sort of proportion to the white man. The whole history of the race points to its limitations and disabilities. Through thousands of years, while other nations were becoming civilized, the negroes of Africa have remained stationary and barbarous.

When they were transported in ship-loads to America as slaves, of course they hadn't quite a fair chance; but since freedom was given to them, have they shown any particular

aptitude for distinguishing themselves in any way? With exceptions here and there, the best that can be said for them is that they make tolerably good servants. They are cheerful and honest—two excellent qualities—but I don't think they're clever, in spite of Thompson's success in “landing” me with stock having dividends paid in heaven, and as a rule I fancy they are happier in subordinate positions. Their personal appearance often frightened me—in tram-cars and the streets—some of them, to our way of thinking, being particularly ill-favoured. I can imagine, if one were at all feverish or delirious, seeing their faces in the dark would produce a fit.

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Of course, in America, among a highly civilized and strenuous people, the negroes are in an absolutely false position. They ought never to be there; but as they *are* there, and are increasing every year—in some of the Southern cities the negro population far outnumbers the white—they'll have to make the best of it all round. I don't think the problem will be successfully solved by admitting them to positions of power and authority in the State, and I don't think the Americans will ever endure it, for nothing can eradicate the inherent antipathy which the black man arouses in the white, and they cannot work in double harness. One must go to the wall, and it will not be the white man.

It is a real tragedy—their presence in America; and this perplexing legacy of past generations is one for which the modern Americans, as well as the negroes themselves, deserve our profound sympathy. I find that enthusiasm for the negroes, as a rule, waxes violent in inverse ratio to the distance that the “enthuser” is from them. Mrs. Beecher Stowe, the writer of Uncle Tom's Cabin, though on the whole she probably 168 did not overstate matters as they then were, had never herself been South in her life; and it is those who know and see least of the negroes who are loudest in the acclamation of their equality to the white man.

Many a white man and woman to-day in America looks back across the years with affectionate memories to their black “mammie” in old slave days in the South; but

emancipated negroes—male and female—of the North to-day are very different beings, and it is difficult to imagine their instilling affection or any sentiment based upon feelings more personal or real than those of a vague and perfunctory philanthropy.

I wonder if I've been very unfair in what I I've just said? Any way, it doesn't much matter, as I haven't got to legislate on the question, and it really is what I think. I'm sorry for the negroes, and I wish they weren't in America at all.

I was struck with the easy access accorded every one to the most important officers of the Government. These great men are not surrounded by barriers, such as one is accustomed to in similar 169 cases in England. The President himself is not difficult of approach, and frequently holds receptions at which Tom, Dick, and Harry are honoured, if not welcome, guests.

I saw him one afternoon in a comfortable slouch hat, in company with the Secretary of War, the two starting out for a walk, unremarked, and apparently unguarded. It was not till later on, at Harvard, that I made his acquaintance (on the occasion of his receiving a university degree), and carried away a very distinct impression of this keen, strenuous man, the very incarnation of energy and masculine vigor.

He has a wonderfully happy and cordial manner, and greeted me then as though I had been the one person in the world he was anxious to meet—surely the most gratifying form of courtesy, and one which touches us all most readily—and though he had probably forgotten my existence the next minute, hurried along among the enthusiastic crowd of his old college companions, like some great good-natured, overgrown boy, receiving and making a thousand salutations, full, as I thought, of a slightly accentuated *bonhomie,* 170 yet the agreeable impression of his welcome remained.

I met him once again, at his own house and under rather amusing circumstances (which I shall relate in due course), at Oyster Bay; but the first view of the happy, breezy boy,

among his old classmates at Harvard University, is that which I shall always prefer to conjure up when I think of Theodore Roosevelt.

I admit American politics puzzled me; they seemed so very complicated. I was once told by a distinguished individual the difference between “Democrat” and “Republican,” but I've forgotten what it was. The impression remains that, generally speaking, each in turn was “agin the government,” and that if “Republicans” were in power the “Democrats” opposed them on every possible occasion, and *vice versâ* .

The absence of political conversation in general society was a great relief after what one has to suffer in that respect in England, where it so often monopolizes the talk to the exclusion of everything else, and where it is regarded, as I said before, as the end of everything, instead of 171 a means to an end—to enable men and women to live their lives in comfort and safety and attend to their vocations and employments (which really mean life) without interruption or interference. So often this, the object of all policies and politics, is lost sight of, it seems to me, and the machine for making the wheels of life run easily is confused with life itself, and an altogether disproportionate and undue importance accorded to it in the press and private conversation, as well as to the individuals who run the machine.

Politicians in America are relegated to their proper place in the general economy of things, and do not loom disproportionately out of the picture. They are public servants, who do their duty well or ill, according to their kind, and there the matter ends.

For some reason or other during my stay in America I was always coming in for celebrations of the “defeat of the British.” I began by feeling a little bit embarrassed, and didn't quite know how to comport myself, but I soon got accustomed to the situation and applauded the speeches and the fireworks with the best of them.

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My first introduction to the anniversary of one of our defeats—I think it was Bunker Hill (a battle, by the way, which we won, didn't we? did we but it really doesn't matter now)—took place near Boston. The outward and visible sign which the inward and spiritual rejoicing of the youth of America over its country's past victories always takes on these occasions is the letting off of innumerable crackers and small bombs in the streets all day long. They begin quite early in the morning and continue with much pertinacity all day; the noise is intolerable. They manage to blow each other up a good deal in the process, too, and the papers the next morning after the celebration of the Fourth of July always contain long lists of fatal accidents directly resulting from these festivities. These anniversaries had a way of obtruding themselves upon one's daily peaceful life in the most unexpected manner. They were always occurring, in season and out of season, and left one with a melancholy impression of *how* proud and pleased they seemed to be to have got rid of us.

I remember once being invited to go up the 173 Hudson in a steam-yacht that was quicker than any other existing steam-yacht in the world. Its furious pace was only rivalled, I believe, by one or two torpedo-boat destroyers.

Our destination was to be Stony Point, a beautiful spot far beyond the famous Palisades. We had a most agreeable voyage up the river, and arrived at our landing place just in time to assist at a celebration of the defeat of the British in 1779, and the dedication of the battle-field to the people as a public park. There was a notice-board with “Battlefield” printed on it in big letters, 174 and there was a brass band and a huge tent, and speeches, which I vigorously applauded. Guns were fired at intervals during the proceedings, and we spent a very pleasant afternoon. I also added to my store of historical information, as I had never before heard of Anthony Wayne or the “battle of Stony Point.”

I was at Oyster Bay during the festivities of the Fourth of July, and celebrated our final defeat by attending a ball at the yacht club across the water, and watching the rockets and fireworks with which the whole population were expressing their jubilation.

They certainly were glad to have turned us out. I wonder what the country would be like now if we had been able to hold on to it? I don't expect it would be nearly so interesting.

English is spoken in America for the most part as we speak it, though usually with changes rung on the inflection which is so familiar to us all. Even when there is no distinct *accent* there is generally an intonation or the introduction of unusual words which betrays the nationality of the speaker.

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The nasal twang, so long associated by us with Americans, is getting rare, and a very pronounced accent of any kind is becoming less noticeable, and among the educated classes is gradually disappearing altogether. They still retain, however, some old English words and forms of speech long since obsolete among us, as, for example, “pitcher” for “jug,” and the old verb to “wilt,” to fade, droop, or wither. Flowers “wilt,” and a woman will say if she has not been feeling well that she is “ *wilted.* ” The past participle of the verb “to get” is usually “gotten” instead of “got.” “I've gotten used to it,” they would say. “Quit” is also a common expression—“I was bored, so I *quit,* ” for “I went away.” There is a slang noun derived from this verb, “a quitter,” meaning a man without grit—some one who fails you. Biscuits are almost always referred to as “crackers.” “Clever” means good-natured. A reel of cotton is a “spool of thread.” An American girl of my acquaintance once spent hours going about in London from shop to shop asking for a “spool of thread.” No one knew what she meant.

I could never make out why, in a land where 176 so much is sacrificed to the saving of time, they should call a lift an “elevator.” The verb “to fix” is very comprehensive and is in use on many different occasions. A woman “fixes” her hair, a servant “fixes” the table, etc. A shop, of course, is generally a “store.” “Clerk” is pronounced as it is spelt; “inquiry” is often a dactyl; “adver *tise* ment” is more commonly than not “advertisement”; a bill at a

restaurant is a “check”; a spittoon is a “cuspidor”; railway-carriages are invariably “cars”; sweetmeats are “candy”; treacle, “molasses.”

There are several slang phrases especially in vogue at present which are so expressive that I cannot help quoting them. If some one gives voice to a sentiment which is not sympathized with, or does anything which is disapproved of, his friend will say, “Oh, go away back and sit down”—a concise definition of self-effacement which it would be difficult to beat. An unpopular person or thing is frequently described as “the limit”—“Oh, he's the *limit* ,” meaning “You *can't* go beyond *that.* ” A phrase, presumably borrowed from poker, is in pretty common use 177 among those who affect slang in conversation. “It's up to you,” means, “ *You've* got to move now; it's your turn.”

“To have a ‘bully’ time,” for a jolly pleasant time, is a very common phrase. I'm not sure that it hasn't been adopted by us.

I may add that the Americans, even the humblest, never under any circumstances, either drop their “hs,” or insert them in the wrong place.

These are some of the most obvious differences of daily expression which strike one over there.

The Americans themselves often have the audacity to refer to an *English accent!* —which always amused me. French may be spoken with an English accent, and generally is by Englishmen—always is byme— 178 or German or Italian, but for an American to speak of an English *accent* is like a singer who habitually sings flat commenting on some one else who is singing in tune! It's absurd. An American may speak English with an American accent, but surely an Englishman speaks English.

XI BOSTON—CAMBRIDGE—CHARLES ELIOT NORTON—HARVARD UNIVERSITY “COMMENCEMENT”—THE ACADEMIC COURSE—FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL

—POOR STUDENTS—SECRET SOCIETIES—MRS. JOHN GARDNER'S VENETIAN PALACE—ITS TREASUREs—DuTY ON WORKS OF ART.

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XI Boston—Cambridge—Charles Eliot Norton—Harvard University “Commencement”—The academic course—Football and baseball—Poor students—Secret societies—Mrs. John Gardner's Venetian palace—Its treasures—Duty on works of art.

BOSTON is a most attractive town; and I had an opportunity of visiting it and studying its ways during two months which, at different times, I spent at Cambridge, the seat of Harvard University, a sort of suburb of Boston proper (though I suppose it wouldn't like being called that). Boston is much more like an English city than any other place in America that I can recall. Beacon Street, opposite the Common, is very like a miniature Piccadilly opposite the Green Park, with no omnibuses and hardly any cabs and a narrow roadway. If one sits at the 182 window of the Somerset Club and looks out on the street one can almost imagine one sees Hyde Park Corner and Grosvenor Place in the distance. The resemblance is very curious, and used to make me quite homesick.

The River Charles is a splendid river, much broader where it passes Boston than the Thames at Westminster, and the backs of the red-brick houses which abut on the embankment of the river are distinctly English in character. One thing that adds extraordinarily to the picturesqueness and beauty of the riverside is that at places where one chiefly sees it, in the heart of Boston, there are no untidy black wharves, manufactories, or other depressing buildings such as desolate the banks of our own Thames the length of its course through London. The pretty neat houses are built to within a short distance of the water's edge, and there is a path or drive between them and the river, and that is all. The effect of peace and cleanliness produced by the absence of squalid foreshores is most noticeable. These may possibly exist lower down, but one doesn't naturally see them. The view across the river from the 183 Cambridge side is beautiful, the town rising gradually along Beacon Hill, till it culminates in a mass of houses

far away, dominated by the State-house, a fine building with a gilded dome, which shines cheerfully in the sun.

Boston being built entirely on one side of the river, you are in the country almost at once the moment you have crossed it, for Cambridge lies buried to such an extent among woods and trees and gardens that it is practically country. This gives an open, fresh aspect to everything along the river, and helps to impart an individuality to Boston which makes it unlike any other city in America.

There is a state of rivalry or rather good-natured badinage, for the two cities cannot in any sense be rivals, existing between Boston and New York, and many a jest is made by each at the other's expense. The accepted New York portrait of Bostonians pictures them as very superior, highly cultured, rather priggish individuals, while Boston professes to regard New York as a city given over to hopeless Mammon worship and frivolity. 13

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A typical sort of joke with regard to Boston appeared in a New York paper a short time ago. A New York girl meets a Boston girl, and asks her, “Do you know ‘ping pong?’” The Boston girl replies, “No; who wrote it?”

The number of women wearing spectacles and *pince-nez* in Boston is remarkable. I once amused myself by counting them as I walked along one of the principal streets at a time when it was crowded. The percentage of spectacled ladies was enormous. I never made out satisfactorily whether this disfigurement was really due to defective sight or to a freak of fashion.

The moral atmosphere of the two cities is absolutely different, nor have they much in common 185 in matters material, except an elevated railway, rather off the beaten track, which somehow doesn't seem quite so offensive in Boston as it does in Sixth Avenue, from

the hurly-burly of which I found it a blessed relief to pitch my tent for a time among the groves of academic Cambridge.

My host was a distinguished professor of Harvard University, who had for some time retired from taking an active part in college affairs, and was passing the autumn of his life in studious retirement, among his books and pictures, cared for by an adoring family and beloved and honoured by all who know how to value wide culture and still wider human sympathies. An intimate friend of Longfellow, Emerson, and 186 Lowell; a friend of Dickens and Carlyle; held in special affection and esteem by Ruskin and my own father, Charles Eliot Norton had been in close touch with all that was greatest and best in the art of England and America for the past sixty years, himself occupying a position and enjoying a reputation in the world of letters which need no recapitulation here. Paying the penalty of those whose days have been prolonged even for a brief period beyond the average of their fellowmen, having outlived nearly all his great contemporaries, I found this gentleman, to whom that word in its truest sense seems more than usually applicable, somewhat stranded, a unique pathetic figure in the life of modern America. He was no stranger to me; natural inclination and tradition have united our families in closest friendship as long as I can remember, and he and his daughters welcomed me with great kindness. As I sank into a chair in his quiet study, surrounded by so many familiar objects and an extraordinarily sympathetic atmosphere, I felt at home at last. Happy are the memories of that peaceful time, so far removed from the storm and stress of life 187 in the world outside. There was no telephone, there was no electric light, there were open fireplaces, there were no bells to speak of—I was going to say there was no bath, by which I mean there was no latest invention of white enameled silver-fitted tanks, such as I had left in New York. I was touchingly reminded of many a little tin tub in England by their counterpart that confronted me the first night I spent at Shady Hill.

And by this do not let me give the impression that all the details of life were not dainty and comfortable in the extreme. I only mean that the spirit of so-called modern progress

had found no welcome here, and had passed by these doors of another time and age, unsought for and unmissed.

While staying here it was my privilege to paint Mr. Norton's portrait, and the pleasant hours spent in so doing will long remain among the happier memories of this happy year.

In Boston I came across a very agreeable artistic community, who met, for the most part, at the Tavern Club, lunching and dining together 188 at a huge round table, in a simple companionship such as hardly exists now in London. The members of this pleasant club all seemed to know each other, and to be on the best of terms, and included the cleverest representatives of the various arts and sciences in the city. The walls were covered with sketches by the members, and there was a cheery Bohemian atmosphere about the whole place which was very refreshing.

During my Cambridge time I had opportunities for observing life as it is lived in the University of Harvard, and was present at most of the festivities of “commencement,” being a guest of the university on the occasion of degrees being conferred, and this was when, as I said, I first met President Roosevelt. A number of “exercises” took place in a theatre something like the Sheldonian at Oxford, and members of the university made speeches and gave recitations. I remember that these involved a *comic* oration, which, though I've quite forgotten what it was about, struck me at the time as being a very creditable performance under the circumstances. It must be so very hard to be funny to order, 189 especially in a university theatre. One orator was also a negro, who spoke uncommonly well.

After the degrees had been conferred (some of the recipients were dentists from the dental school), we all met in the Memorial Hall, a large building dedicated to the memory of those members of the university who fell in the civil war. Here a meal was served at innumerable long tables, and speeches were delivered by prominent officials, among others by the President of the United States himself. His was a vigorous, incisive performance,

accompanied by much gesticulation and facial expression, and was occupied chiefly, as far as I remember, in an energetic defence of some of his political colleagues, who had apparently been criticised adversely for some reason by somebody.

The University of Harvard differs in so many ways from that of Oxford or Cambridge that I will only refer here to some of the more salient points of difference.

It is a university without separate college buildings, the original Harvard College having gradually expanded into a university. The students 190 live in rooms and halls and lodging-houses, these latter a sort of combination of club-house and apartment-house. There are two terms in the year, which begins, for academic purposes, at the end of September.

The vacations, or recesses, are three in number; about a week at Christmas, another week at Easter, and a long vacation of fourteen weeks from commencement day (the end of June) to the beginning of the new academic year in September.

The entire course of study for a degree occupies four years, and each year has a distinct class. The student during his first year is known as a freshman, during his second as a sophomore. The third year he is a junior, and the fourth a senior, when he takes his degree and goes on his way rejoicing,

The course *can* be completed in three years, and this shorter period is becoming more and more popular.

As in our own universities, athletics command a somewhat disproportionate amount of attention and interest. The great athletic event of the year is of course the football match with Yale, 191 which is decided in two big events, one of which takes place at Cambridge and one at New Haven, and, in case of a tie, a final one on neutral ground.

The opposing teams are clad in a species of armour, with padded greaves and shoulder-pieces, in which they appear most formidable objects.

There is also a series of baseball games with Yale, which take place in the summer; one of which I was fortunate enough to be present at.

It took place in a large field outside the town of Cambridge, and was witnessed by a huge crowd of students from both universities, their cousins and their sisters and their aunts.

I had never seen the game played before, as it is hardly ever played over here, and it was very interesting, though a bit puzzling. It seemed like an elaborate and highly developed form of “rounders.” It was followed with noisy and enthusiastic interest by the assembled multitude, the partisans of each side urging and encouraging their champions by strange but individual forms of cheering, which are peculiar to the two universities of Yale and Harvard, and which involve the 192 repetition eight or a dozen times of the syllable “rah” (presumably the end of “hurrah”), the combined effect being highly stimulating and encouraging.

These events are the subject of a great amount of betting both without and within the university. Indeed athletics are the most prominent feature of college life, and a sign of their extreme popularity is afforded by the fact that a class which graduated twenty-five years ago has subscribed $75,000 (£ 15,000) to put up on a playing-ground called Soldiers' Field (in memory of graduates who fell in the war) an amphitheatre of permanent stone seats from which to watch the games of baseball and football.

The University of Harvard being, as all universities are, a microcosm of the big world without, the expense of life varies according to the means or extravagance of the undergraduates. It is possible to live extremely cheaply, and I imagine there is a greater proportion of really very poor students at Harvard and Yale than there is at either Oxford or Cambridge here. In this respect the American universities bear 193 more resemblance

to those of Scotland; two men will often share the same study, with separate bedrooms opening out of it. A negro student at Yale who carried off a very important university prize during my visit, earned his living in any way he could during odd hours. He had been a ferryman on the Arkansas River, working Saturdays and Sundays, as well as a labourer on a railroad, when I saw him he was earning money by cleaning windows.

Both Yale and Harvard contain a number of secret societies, distinguished from each other by three capital letters of the Greek alphabet, standing for some aphorism which is the watchword of the society. Thus at Harvard among others there is the # # # (###o#o#[???]# #[???]o[???] #[???]#e##[???]###), and this includes many of the best scholars. Others are purely social clubs, competition for membership in which is very keen. I even heard of a student at Yale who was so bitterly disappointed 194 at not being elected to one of these societies that he committed suicide! There is another club at Harvard—the “Hasty-Pudding,” which is very popular, and always gives a dramatic representation of some sort during the year.

Generally speaking, I gathered that luxury was increasing in college life.

Caps and gowns are never worn by undergraduates except during the few final weeks of examination at the end of the course by the senior class. You then see men walking about looking a bit self-conscious, in brand new mortarboards and academic robes, which hardly seem to fit the genius of the place; for “dressing up” in any way is most foreign to the instincts of American men.

As one might expect, there are no “town and gown” rows, and the students rarely come into collision with the police. Morals and manners on the whole are at a pretty high level at Harvard; scandals are practically unknown, and you can't get a drink at any time anywhere (except at at the clubs), for there are no taverns in the town.

195

At present the total number of students on the books slightly exceeds five thousand.

While staying at Cambridge I had several opportunities of visiting Mrs. John Gardner's Venetian palace, outside Boston, to which I have already referred. It is a very wonderful building, proclaiming at every turn the unique personality and ingenious resource of its mistress. Though of immense size, its outer aspect is of the simplest; gray walls and red tiles are what one chiefly remembers. It is when one has entered the hall and the doors are closed that the peculiar charm of the place begins to assert itself. The house is built round a central courtyard and approached through cloisters. On all sides are ancient Italian marbles, statues and mosaics. Opposite the principal door, as one enters across the quadrangle, which is filled with palms and sweet-scented shrubs of every description, is an old marble fountain, whose trickling murmur adds to the peace and beauty of the scene. Beyond it is an outside staircase, a faithful reproduction of one which I remembered seeing in a garden in Venice. In these quiet halls the atmosphere 196 of the modern world has been curiously dispelled. The sunshine, as it streams in through the glazed roof of the courtyard, falls upon some antique bust or carved sarcophagus. My hostess seemed to have carried off from Venice everything that was portable. There is no jarring note anywhere. One might be in a palace of medieval Italy. Though the walls of the quadrangle are so new that the plaster is hardly dry, the clever lady who devised them with so much skill has found a means to prevent the raw white of them striking one unpleasantly, or the monotonous effect of any mechanical smoothness of surface contrasting harshly with the time-worn treasures of the ancient world which they contain. She personally superintended the construction of these walls, showing the workmen how to lay the plaster unevenly, and with her own hands at first, to show them the way, covered the surface thus prepared with a very agreeable pink stain, so that they already look weather-worn, and are in harmonious keeping with their surroundings.

Her choice of pictures and drawings by the 197 old masters is no less admirable than her taste in architecture and the adornment of her house. As one sat in these fairy cloisters,

turning over original drawings by Raphael, Michael Angelo, Mantegna, Tintoretto, and many another mighty master of antiquity, it was very difficult to believe that one was in modern Boston; one seemed to have been suddenly transplanted by some miracle to Venice, and the far-off murmur of the tram-cars to have been turned, by enchantment, into the distant roar of the Adriatic.

But the wonders of this remarkable house only begin with the courtyard. Within are treasures untold: masterpieces bearing some of the greatest names the world has known, beautiful and priceless books—one could wander for weeks in the galleries and chambers of this extraordinary house and never have come to the end of the wonders it contains.

In different rooms were beautiful examples of Raphael, Fra Angelico, Rembrandt, Rubens, Holbein, Veronese, Tintoretto, Titian, Velasquez—to name only a few of the paintings—and in one room I saw the famous bronze bust of Bindo 198 Altoviti, by Benvenuto Cellini, about which Michael Angelo wrote to the artist:

Dear Friend Benvenuto: I have for many years known you for one of the ablest jewellers in the world, and I now find that you have equal abilities as a sculptor. You must know that Signor Bindo Altovid showed me his bust in bronze, and told me that it was done by you. I was highly pleased with the execution, but it gave me great uneasiness to see it placed in a disadvantageous light; had it but have been properly situated it would have appeared to be the masterpiece it is.

It is in a good light at last—in a far-off land of which Michael Angelo never dreamed more than three hundred years ago, but if he could see it to-day I think he would be satisfied.

Of course, the amount of duty which Mrs. Gardner has had to pay on these priceless possessions is colossal. At last it began to tax the resources of her own almost unlimited purse, and she succeeded in making an arrangement with the Treasury by which she was enabled to bring a quantity of works of art into the country free of duty, provided she devoted them to educational purposes; in other words, allowed the populace to view them

from time to time. This disagreeable 199 condition she has now to conform to, and once a month the doors of this paradise are thrown open to an American crowd, which in no way seems to appreciate the privilege it enjoys, and returns the hospitality of its hostess by sending her abusive anonymous letters and damaging the walls against which it leans and the carpets over which it tramples.

The appearance of some of the rooms containing the most valuable paintings is entirely spoiled by long ropes to keep these unwelcome monthly visitors in some sort of control, and as I thought of this periodical invasion, for the most part by unappreciative individuals, whose chief motive for coming at all was idle curiosity, I felt an additional grudge against the stupid tariff laws of the United States, which apply the same rules to works of art a thousand years old—hardly dangerous competitors, one would have thought, with the modern American artist—as they do to consignments of soap or sausages.

So long as this prohibitive tariff on works of art, especially ancient art, exists, so long will America be retarding the day when her sons may 14 200 enter of right into their share of the inheritance of the past, so long will she be confining the possession of beautiful things almost entirely to the very wealthy (not a very democratic principle) and, generally speaking, standing in the way of popular education.

XII OYSTER BAY—COUNTRY LIFE—FRITZ—VISIT TO THE PRESIDENT—LACK OF CONSIDERATION SHOWN TO PAINTERS—MR. WIDENER'S HOUSE IN PHILADELPHIA—PROHIBITION STATES—THE “PROPERTY PIE.”

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XII Oyster Bay—Country Life—Fritz—Visit to the President—Lack of consideration shown to painters—Mr. Widener's house in Philadelphia—Prohibition States—The “property pie.”

FROM Boston I went to Oyster Bay, to spend July with Fritz and his parents. I think this month will remain in my memory always as quite the pleasantest experience during the

entire visit. My friends, who lived in a charming house, within a stone's throw of the water, received me with a gracious hospitality which I shall never forget.

During the four weeks that I was their guest I became practically a member of the family, and thus had an exceptional opportunity for studying the simpler American home life in all its aspects—and a happy life it is.

204

The “piazza” or veranda, practically unknown among ourselves, where so few days or nights are suitable for outdoor life, is an institution in America which contributes largely to one's happiness in summer days. Here one sits for hours in the cosiest of armchairs or lies in a hammock, reading or smoking or talking; here tea is served; and here at intervals throughout the day the various members of the family and guests congregate. And on summer nights, what a relief to quit the hot rooms indoors, and sit again upon the piazza, listening to the humming and confused chirrupings of a thousand insects—the unwearying note of the onomatopoeic “katydids,” the horse croak of the tree-frog, or following in dreamy vision the flight of the myriad fireflies as they flit in and out among the dark foliage of the trees. Those were happy days, and as such days will, they passed with regrettable swiftness. It was more or less an amphibious life we led, sailing or riding and driving about the country, and returning home to plunge into the cool waters of the bay, at the bottom of which one could often discern the shells of the oysters from which it took its name.

205

There was a little private pier, belonging to the house, running out into the sea, with a floating platform at the end, which rose or fell with the tide, a region most rightly forbidden to Fritz, unless under grown-up surveillance, and from this we bathed or embarked in the “Heron,” a small yacht which was a perpetual joy to my host, who, in company with Ben, an outdoor servant of somewhat undefined responsibilities, a sworn ally of Fritz, used to take part in weekly sailing matches with other little craft along the bay.

This ended in a shipwreck one day, the “Heron” being run down by a rival boat, but fortunately there was no loss of life.

Ben was a character, a young American of independent views, who in the winter months pursued the calling of a fisherman, and in the summer devoted his energies to the garden, the horses, and the yacht at Oyster Bay.

Fritz never left his side, and Ben shared with 206 Monica the distinction of inspiring a certain amount of awe in the breast of his young master, who, whenever he could, borrowed for his own use Ben's hat, a sort of yachting-cap, much too large, and totally unsuitable for a small child, but for some unknown reason greatly beloved and preferred to his own. The goat who spent a retired life, tethered in a remote corner of the garden, was also a favorite companion of Fritz, and this harmless trio, Ben, Fritz and the goat, moved not always absolutely noiselessly, but 207 generally very agreeably, across the dreamy horizon of these long summer days. At the top of a little hill, its garden adjoining ours, was the house of my host's father, a distinguished lawyer, cut off by ill health from work in the zenith of his days, and compelled to live a life of rest and inaction upon his own piazza.

I often visited this gentle invalid in his enforced idleness and enjoyed the privilege of doing so. He was a man of great cultivation and personal charm, who had led a most interesting and eventful life, of which his active brain retained many memories. I knew what this compulsory imprisonment must mean to him, though I never heard one word of complaint. There he would sit for hours on his piazza, gazing from the heights across the two gardens, his own and Fritz's, to the bay and the hills beyond, the child's voice among the currant-bushes in the far-off lower garden ringing clearly in the still summer air, and at times Monica's harsh voice would reach us too, as she sped in pursuit of her small charge or foreshadowed in threatening accents the terrors of castor-oil.

208

I remember Tim and his baby brother had violent whooping-cough during the whole of my visit, but it didn't seem to alter the general plan of life in any way, and as neither Ben nor the goat caught it, all was well.

Once or twice a day the child would go to see his grandfather on the hill, and these visits, though they usually brought a tumult and whirlwind in their train, were greatly looked forward to by the old man. A packet of sweets, supposed to be the offering of a mythical being, “Abracadabra,” was generally produced on these occasions, and I fear that with Fritz it was oftener in expectation of this material benefit than from motives of sentiment or piety that this daily pilgrimage was taken.

The President's house was quite close to Fritz's, and it occurred to me one day that it would be very nice if I could induce Mr. Roosevelt to sit for his portrait. I accordingly sought an interview, which was granted me, the time settled on being nine o'clock in the evening.

This pleased me greatly, as I felt sure that after dinner would be in every way a most suitable 209 time for making my tiresome request—my intended victim would at all events be in a comfortable frame of mind and body and less likely to jibe at the idea.

Accordingly, on the day agreed upon, my host and I set out and arrived at the President's house punctually at the appointed hour. There was an absolute simplicity and lack of ostentation about the house and its surroundings. The only sign that it was anything but an ordinary well-to-do citizen's house that we were approaching was the presence of a Secret-Service man outside the door, but he offered no serious impediment to our progress.

The door itself was opened by a neat maid-servant, and we were ushered into the library. Seated on a low chair, absorbed in a book, was a lad, presumably one of the sons of the house. He looked up at our entry, but almost at once resumed his reading. Then,

suddenly getting up, he uttered these ominous words, “I want my dinner!” and left the room. Shortly afterward footsteps approached, and the President himself appeared—the same strenuous figure I remembered 210 at Harvard, courteous and charming in manner, but somehow, I thought, perhaps a shade less boisterously glad to see me. Did he suspect the worst?

Conversation then became general, but I've entirely forgotten what it was about; I was only thinking of how I could best lead up to my audacious request. The talk, which had never had even the slightest connection with art, now drifted into hopelessly remote regions, and I began to get desperate. To add to my discomfort and anxiety a loud dinner-bell suddenly broke in upon our aimless and embarrassing colloquy (in which the President and Fritz's father were now the principal participators), and I realized for the first time that Mr. Roosevelt had not yet had his dinner. I confess this discovery staggered me, and when during desperate efforts to bring round the subject under discussion to the question uppermost in my mind a second bell pealed forth with increased insistence, I threw up the sponge, and boldly, crudely, bluntly, without any introduction, asked the President if he would let me paint his portrait. Was ever a request made under 211 more unlucky auspices? My distinguished host had arrived home late from a picnic, and was probably both tired and hungry. Of course, he didn't want to sit for his portrait, and of course hundreds of American artists must have asked him a similar favor, and he'd offend them dreadfully if he granted to a foreigner what he had denied them. I began to wish I hadn't suggested it at all.

“How long would you take?” the President inquired. In desperation I replied, “Oh, half an hour.” But even this inducement, which he must have known was false, failed of its desired effect. He hesitated and I was lost. I then expressed anxiety lest I were keeping him from his evening meal, and amid renewed apologies on my part and polite speeches and excuses on his, we all three drifted into the hall. The last words from the presidential

lips that reached my ears as I departed were, “Well, I'll write to you about it.” I am still waiting for that letter.

And this is how I did *not* paint the President's portrait.

Perhaps, without being accused of calling 212 grapes sour, I really was well out of it, for from what I saw of the Chief Magistrate's strenuous personality, I think, as a sitter, he might have been more exacting even than Fritz.

Poor man! he must have been glad when the front door finally closed upon the foreign painter, and he was enabled to sit down comfortably to dinner; but he never by word or sign showed the impatience I have no doubt he felt; and though I couldn't help a little bit smiling at the fiasco of the whole affair, I carried away nothing but the pleasantest recollections of kindness and courtesy from Sagamore Hill.

I had one other rather amusing professional experience while I was in America, which I will relate as an example of the extraordinary lack of consideration with which some people will behave to painters, thinking, I suppose, that they are not good men of business, and that the customary rules which regulate commercial transactions between gentlemen, are in their case temporarily suspended.

Shortly after my arrival in the United States I received a letter from a man with whom I had 213 had a slight acquaintance—and to whom I had once sold a small picture—in London. He suggested that I should pay him a visit in the country. This I did, spending an agreeable enough time, and renewing my acquaintance with his wife. We talked a good deal about pictures, and he appeared to be much interested in my work and prospects, and some weeks later suggested that I should again pay him a visit, and mentioned a particular picture which he hoped I would bring down with me, presumably with a view to purchasing it. So down I went, taking with me the picture he had specially requested. It remained on a chair in the drawing-room during my visit, and, my host having made no further reference to it, I carried it back with me when I returned to New York. From time to time my friend

and his wife called upon me at my studio in town, and on one occasion, having honoured me with another invitation to his house, he selected two little water-colour paintings, which he specially asked me to bring down with me.

This time I felt certain that he would know his mind, and buy the pictures, especially as he 214 had demanded and been told their price. When I went away this time, he asked me to leave the pictures behind, which I accordingly did. No mention was made of completing the purchase, but I received a note a little later on, saying that both my pictures were hanging up in his drawing-room. I now felt no doubt but that the transaction was finished, and mentally regarded the paintings as sold. But I had reckoned without my host. Very many weeks after I had heard that my work was hanging upon his walls, my strange friend turned up one day at my studio, and after a desultory conversation about indifferent matters, “By the bye, he remarked,” “wouldn't you be liking those paintings of yours back again, that I've got?” I confess I was surprised at the coolness of this suggestion—but of course I said that I should be very glad to have my work back again—the sooner the better. The pictures were duly returned, and this ended the matter.

Now if I'd been a diamond merchant or a silk merchant or a dealer in antiquities, I wonder whether he would have kept my goods all those 215 weeks, deriving benefit from them all the time (he admitted they were hanging up in his room, so he must have cared to look at them), and then calmly asking me to take them back! Such conduct, however, is not at all peculiar to America. I have met with similar instances in England; one man, I remember, getting out of a commission he had given me at the eleventh hour by pleading that his doctor had said he wasn't well enough to bear the excitement of buying a picture; and on another occasion (also in England) a man freed himself from purchasing a picture of mine by complaining that it was moonlight—“the *one* light he couldn't bear!”

I only mention the incident of my American friend to show how very funnily people, otherwise honourable men, will behave to artists, with whom they seem to feel safe to play tricks which would never be tolerated in ordinary business relations. I suppose they know

that, as a rule, artists are a sensitive folk, who greatly dislike holding a man to a bargain against his will,—and to do them justice they often take full advantage of this knowledge.

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Talking about interesting and individual houses—such as Mrs. John Gardner's—I cannot omit to mention Mr. Widener's house near Philadelphia. His gallery of paintings is one of the very finest in the United States. Whether he has chosen the paintings himself or had the instinct whom to intrust with their selection—it comes to the same in the end. The standard throughout has been kept extremely high, and the catholicity of choice equally broad, as may be seen from a list of the pictures which impressed themselves most forcibly on my memory. There were examples of Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Signorelli, Spinelli, Holbein, Turner, Dürer, Constable, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Peter de Hooch, Gainsborough, and Rubens—and they were first-rate examples of all these masters. There was the best Canaletto among them that I've ever seen. There are hardly any works in this collection that, one would not be glad to possess, and few that would not be welcomed by our own National Gallery. The big connoisseurs in art in America to-day are fast acquiring a knowledge of their subject, and the good old days for the dealers, when any old rubbish 217 could be palmed off upon unsophisticated and unsuspecting millionaires, are giving place to an era of enlightened judgment and wholesome distrust. The house itself in which these treasures are contained is a very fine building—the copy, if I remember rightly, of an English house near Bath. There was also some beautiful and priceless Louis XV furniture, but the pictures were what chiefly delighted me.

On my way to Mr. Widener's, I remember lunching at the station at Philadelphia. It was Sunday, and on this day for some extraordinary reason, best known to themselves, the Philadelphians are not allowed to drink anything more stimulating than water. I suppose the city is in what is called a “prohibition State.” I never got accustomed to the silly and irritating laws with regard to Sunday drinking in the United States. Why should harmless individuals, for no earthly reason, suddenly be deprived of their usual liquid nourishment on one special day in the week! Even on railway-cars they will refuse to serve you with

anything stronger than water if the train is passing through one of these “prohibition States.”

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In New York you can actually get something to drink; but on condition that you purchase a small pie, of revolting appearance, and call it a “meal.” If you will not eat, neither shall you drink, seems to be the idea of this grandmotherly legislation. However, as long as one pays for the pie the police happily do not compel one to eat it; so the same old pie goes the round of the restaurant, and is familiarly known as the “property pie”—so stale and unappetizing does it become in the course of its wanderings.

XIII CHICAGO, ITS NOISE AND DIRT—ART INSTITUTE—UNINSPIRING TO ARTISTS—NEWSPAPER LIES—No REDRESS FOR LIBEL—WESTERN HOSPITALITY—NIAGARA—HIDEOUS POWER-HOUSES—LUNCH IN CANADA—DEEDS OF DARING—GOODBYE TO NEW YORK—SALE OF “CONTENTS OF STUDIO” HOMEWARD BOUND—DAILY POST *EN ROUTE* —LONDON.

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XIII Chicago, its noise and dirt—Art Institute—Uninspiring to artists—Newspaper lies—No redress for libel—Western hospitality—Niagara—Hideous power-houses—Lunch in Canada—Deeds of daring—Goodbye to New York—Sale of “contents of studio”—Homeward bound—Daily post *en route* —London.

FROM Oyster Bay to Chicago is a far cry—both literally and figuratively. The journey from New York takes about twenty hours, which is perhaps not too much when one considers that it embraces both Syracuse and Rome on the way.

The Syracusans must retain something of their ancient hardihood, and still be a race quite devoid of fear, for the train passes through the principal streets of the town, in the middle of the road, all among the shops and people, and nobody seems 222 to mind it in the least. The Romans are subjected to no such ordeal.

As we approached Chicago early one February morning, a thick fog hung like a pall over the city, the dreary outskirts of which were black with smoke and grime from a thousand factory chimneys.

I'm afraid it was a little bit like London at first sight, and my thoughts reverted instinctively to my native land; but the resemblance was only smoke deep. The buildings, which emerged from the general gloom, reminded one of nothing one had seen before.

I don't suppose that even its own inhabitants 223 would seriously make excuses for Chicago. It is an ugly, dirty, noisy, wind-swept city, if ever there was one. Of course I saw it under the most disadvantageous and discouraging conditions, and at the very worst time of the year; still, nothing—not even the most brilliant sunshine—could have made it appear a beautiful city, and one would be a little exacting, perhaps, to expect that it should be one. The wonder is that the hideous place, so vast and populous as it is, should be in existence at all.

I am myself ten years older than Chicago; and when one remembers that the entire city, as one sees it to-day, practically dates from 1871, one must admit that it is an extraordinary monument of human energy and enterprise.

Snow and slush made the streets almost impassable, and the gray expanse of the icy lake, along whose shore stretched a depressing and interminable drive, served still further to disenchant one with the “Windy City.”

I never got a proper view of Lake Michigan (which is in reality a huge inland sea) all the time I was there, because a railway runs along its shore, 224 exactly on a line with the horizon, effectually obscuring all view of the water.

Perhaps one does New York an injustice when one complains of its lack of repose. Chicago in this respect is far worse, and has all New York's least desirable characteristics exaggerated twofold. The street-cars here run in couples, thus multiplying their horrors by

two. They also seem to run twice as fast. The sky-scrapers, which flourish vigorously in the congenial soil of Chicago, appear twice as high as those of New York. Its newspapers are quite twice as vulgar, and in tone of twice as deep a yellow.

I naturally avoided the “stock-yards,” which so many tourists seek in Chicago with the same avidity that they do the Morgue in Paris, and if you don't visit these mammoth shambles, Chicago has little else to offer you as a public spectacle.

The distances in Chicago are immense—the chief residential quarters being on different sides of the Chicago River—so that a person living seven miles out on the south side and dining with a friend who lived the same distance on the north, has a very considerable way to drive.

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The Annex of the Auditorium Hotel, where I stopped, was an immense structure, hideous outside, but redeemed within by a finely proportioned Pompeian court, in which a large fountain of hot water was always playing. The steam on the surface of the water gave the basin an extraordinary appearance, but one could understand that an equal quantity of cold water might have had a rather chilling effect upon travellers, so I suppose they did quite right to heat it.

One hardly associates the cultivation of the arts with Chicago, yet it is by no means indifferent to them, and the Art Institute, a huge building on Michigan Avenue, has a most creditable collection of casts from the antique, as well as several galleries of paintings of varying merit. It has also a large school for art students, which is numerously attended. I think there are between one and two thousand pupils. It was like a haven of refuge, this building filled with so many beautiful and interesting things, and I often sought in its quiet galleries and halls a momentary respite from the squalor and ugliness of the streets outside.

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For an artist the place seemed to me to be very uninspiring, and I could hardly think of any imaginative work being done there; indeed, throughout the whole country, so far as I could judge, the romantic and imaginative side of painting is but poorly represented. The intensely practical and matter-of-fact attitude of the people towards life and their ugly surroundings would go far to explain this. Nothing ever “weathers”—one never sees moss or lichen upon a building, even upon an ancient one fifty years old—and ivy won't grow anywhere either. Everything looks crude and new. Portraits seem the only strong point with native American artists to-day.

There are some capital clubs in Chicago, arranged upon the same extensive and luxurious scale as those of New York, to which the stranger is admitted and made welcome in a way, as I said before, that puts our own hospitality to shame.

While in Chicago I suffered more from the newspaper interviewers than I had ever done before.

I think they seemed more reckless and indifferent to truth than their *confrères* of New York even.

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One day, as I sat in the Pompeian court above alluded to, a reporter begged me to make a sketch of a head, “a woman yawning,” he asked for, and I thoughtlessly and innocently complied with his request—an entirely imaginary scribble, and I added also a grotesque face of a man, as well as a caricature of myself.

These scrawls were reproduced in a newspaper next morning, accompanied by the following inscription:

Directing the eye to these interesting outlines, in the upper left corner will be recognised a distinguished “leader of the 400.” Beneath are depicted the features of a no less prominent society matron of the present day. Sir Philip Burne-Jones has drawn his own figure in the

centre—while on the right, undoubtedly, may be found his concrete idea of the Chicago man.

On the strength of these misleading remarks a scurrilous so-called “society” journal in New York thought fit the following week to accuse me of having gone to Chicago and there amused my friends by caricaturing hostesses who had entertained me, and it was not ashamed to mention by name one of the best known ladies in New York as having been one of my victims.

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The injustice and falseness of this paragraph roused me to publicly contradict it in the press, and I wrote the following letter to the New York Tribune:

To the Editor of the Tribune.

Sir: I am a stranger in a strange land, but I have been welcomed with a hospitality which in most cases I shall be unable to repay, and for which I feel a gratitude I find it difficult to express. I have been told that your “yellow press” and a so-called “society” journal (which I need not name) are discredited publications which decent people either do not read at all, or chiefly disbelieve, if they do. To the many lies—I use the word advisedly—which these journals have published concerning me since I arrived in this country I have hitherto made no reply, believing that to do so would be waste of time, and that in the main no credence was given to gossip from such a tainted source.

In the current number, however, of the scurrilous “society” journal to which I have alluded there occurs a statement so false, so absolutely without foundation, and so maliciously untrue, that I am compelled for once to break my habitual silence, believing, sir, that you will help me to protest, with indignation, against currency being given to such a lie. I am accused by my anonymous traducer of having made caricatures, for the edification of my friends, of hostesses who have entertained me, and he does not hesitate, in this wicked fabrication, to name a gracious 229 lady whose guest I was shortly before I left

New York. To answer such a charge as this would be humiliating, but surely the time has come when public opinion should be brought to bear upon the infamies of this gutter press —for I cannot believe that the majority of this great nation has sympathy with anything so unworthy—and when an unoffending stranger may at least be protected from such outrage.

If the law is powerless in the matter, surely the reputable press throughout the country might raise its voice in no uncertain key against this cancerous growth which is helping to degrade healthy American journalism; and if the protest were long and loud enough, I am convinced that the public would indorse it, and so pave the way to removing what all right-minded men and women must consider a disgrace to American journalism.

Chicago, *January 23, 1903.*

The result of this protest was that the aforesaid scurrilous journal in New York “went for” me the following week with renewed fury, pouring out nearly a column of venomous abuse interspersed with lies, and repeating the libel of the week before, with circumstantial details (all false) and mentioning another lady, well known in Chicago by name, as having suffered in a similar way at my hands.

It seems ridiculous at this distance of time that 230 I should have taken the matter so seriously as I did. People I spoke to about it assured me that no one believed what this evil paper said, and that it lived solely on abuse and blackmail; but I felt troubled, all the same, that such unworthy and treacherous conduct should have been ascribed to me, even by this rag.

There seemed, however, nothing to be done; so, after writing privately to the ladies in question, I let the matter drop—not, however, without having consulted a lawyer in New York with a view to instituting an action for criminal libel against the paper in question.

He recommended me not to trouble any more about the subject; that it certainly wasn't worth bringing an action about, and that if I did, the case would only come on for hearing after a great lapse of time, during which people would have forgotten all about it. At the same time he assured me that I should earn the approval and gratitude of the community at large if I called on the editor myself and thrashed him, though he didn't advise this either.

Indeed, I heard that to protect himself from 231 well-merited chastisement this worthy lived in perpetual concealment somewhere at the back of his office, which was filled entirely with women, and that whenever an indignant victim of some more than usually atrocious slander appeared at the door to inflict condign punishment upon him, he was received by a little delicate old lady, the editor's representative.

Even protected by a bodyguard of women, it is strange that this notorious individual should escape without broken bones, when one considers the flagrant lies and vile gossip which are vomited from his press every week concerning the most prominent citizens, their wives and daughters. Young unmarried girls are alluded to insolently by their Christian names, *tout court* , and how their fathers and brothers endure it I don't know. The libel laws of the United States are in a parlous condition and need reconstructing on vigorous lines. Editors, such as the one I have mentioned, would then soon be laid by the heels; a few years' imprisonment would serve as a wholesome discouragement to these men, and the journalistic atmosphere would be purified. 16

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I mention this episode as an example of the unscrupulous conduct of a portion of the American press, and also to prove how powerless the injured parties seem to be in the matter.

In cheering contrast to the ignominies of the yellow press of Chicago was the kind hospitality of individuals.

Private hospitality was as delightful and spontaneous here as everywhere else in the United States, and there was an easy and unconventional air about it which was very refreshing and unlike the more monotonous and formal entertainments of the East. One glorious evening is indelibly imprinted on my memory. We sat down seventy-two to dinner, a piper in full Highland costume heralding the feast, in the middle of which our hostess stood up and made a very pretty speech. Every one seemed to enjoy themselves immensely, and not to be ashamed of appearing to do so.

Dinner was followed by a “vaudeville” entertainment, which, recruited partly from amateur talent among the guests and partly from professional sources, was really amusing.

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Elaborate scenery had been specially designed and painted for the occasion and the party ended with a ball.

Before leaving Chicago an interviewer from some newspaper requested to see me. There had been a large fancy-dress bazaar a day or two before, and he brought with him a bundle of photographs of ladies who had taken part in it. He wanted my opinion as to which I thought the most attractive costume.

I replied that I absolutely refused to discuss with him any lady in Chicago. I expressed no opinion whatever on the photographs, and he thanked me and withdrew. This is all that took place on the occasion.

The next day a full-length portrait of a young lady in fancy costume appeared in one of the principal papers. Above it was printed in big type “Miss—given the beauty prize by Burne-Jones,” and underneath, “English artist says Mrs.—'s niece is Chicago's handsomest woman.” To my knowledge I had never even seen the lady in question (whose full name, by the way, was given), and I certainly never mentioned her to a newspaper reporter.

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With this last lie ringing in my ears I turned my back upon Chicago. Some of its inhabitants, as I said, were charming and delightful people, whom I much hope I may one day meet under happier conditions, but my general recollection of the town itself was gloomy in the extreme and the riot of untruth in its press left behind a really painful and disheartening impression.

I suppose no tour in the United States would be considered complete without paying a visit to Niagara.

Accordingly I looked round for a companion (not feeling in the mood to make the journey alone), and found a delightful one in the shape of an American who had himself never seen the falls.

We went by a comfortable night train—Buffalo is only twelve hours off—and arrived in plenty of time for breakfast at the Iroquois hotel, one of the best appointed hotels I came across in America. After breakfast we took a street electric car and rode out twelve miles, I should think, to Niagara.

It was a gray day, inclined to rain, and very 235 cold; the ice-bridge had broken up the week before, but there remained a quantity of unmelted snow and ice in the river, so that one saw the cataract not under the best conditions, for it was neither summer nor winter.

However, nothing could spoil the grandeur of the falls themselves, though man had done his very best in that direction by covering the shores with huge advertisements (I noted the goods advertised, and registered a private vow on no account ever to buy any of them) and also, near the American Falls, by the hideous power-houses. These were built on the edge of the cliffs, and contained machinery moved by streams of water diverted in subterranean channels from the falls, trickling out of the rock in a dozen miserable streams, like sewers, about the same height as the falls themselves, a wretched parody of nature's own work.

Discussions are now going on in the papers as to whether or not this incessant drain on the waters of the Niagara River will or will not affect the appearance of the falls themselves; and an interview with a leading manufacturer who has 236 contributed his mite, a substantial one, towards the destruction of “the grandest spectacle which nature affords anywhere on this planet,” is instructive, if a bit discouraging, as showing the attitude of the modern Yankee tradesman towards anything, however unique and glorious a manifestation of nature, that stands between him and his dollars.

The following question was asked this man:

“Do you think the spectacle of the falls is endangered by the development?”

This was the characteristic answer: “The question to my mind is, whether the *march of progress* [the italics are mine] can be stopped by sentiment.”

“Well,” continued the questioner, “suppose it were possible to transmit Niagara power to New York city at an economical price, what would happen at Niagara?”

The reply was: “Niagara Falls as a scenic display would have to give up. The commercial spirit and necessity would not warrant holding the show any longer.”

I confessed I felt depressed by the vulgar surroundings 237 which at all turns inflicted themselves upon one's vision, and I couldn't help thinking that the enterprising tradesmen and engineers might have chosen some less lovely spot on this earth to desecrate with their common advertisements and hideous factories.

For a moment I tried to shut out these horrors from my sight, and also the ugly iron suspension bridge below the falls, and imagine what the scene must have looked like to the first man who beheld it—sublime and impressive beyond words. To-day quite three-quarters of its beauty is destroyed in the manner I have described.

We had a capital view of the rapids above the falls from Goat Island, and then crossed the bridge into Canada, where at an hotel by the river-side we had quite one of the worst lunches on record. It would have been nothing short of disloyalty to have drunk the King's health in the disgusting cocktail they brought us. However, my foot was for a moment on British soil, which was interesting to think of, but I should like to have had a better opportunity of showing my American guest what the colonies can do in the 238 way of luncheon—for I suppose that is not the best they have to offer.

After this nauseating repast, we drove down to the lower rapids and the famous whirlpool, where the gorge becomes very narrow, and the combined waters of Lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior rush in thundering torrents at Heaven knows how many miles an hour—a scene almost as impressive as the falls themselves.

It seemed incredible that any human being could ever have had the fortitude to venture to swim in those boiling waters, in the most furious part of which waves rise twenty or thirty feet high, like breakers in a mighty ocean. It was here that Captain Webb lost his life, and I do not wonder.

A woman, by the way, successfully went over the Horseshoe Falls in a barrel a short time ago. I had read of this, and felt vaguely that it had been a deed of great daring or great desperation; but seeing the actual spot made one realize the terrific nature of the feat. It is wonderful what humanity will undergo. Sometimes I think that deeds of this kind are due to a certain lack of 239 imagination; it seems the only way to explain them.

We were glad to return to the hotel at Buffalo, where an excellent dinner obliterated the memory of our colonial lunch. The only incident which marred the perfect peace of the remainder of the evening was the telephone ringing me up in my room just as I was going to sleep, the inevitable reporter at the other end, wishing to know whether I would see him. With Chicago experiences fresh in my mind, I replied that I would much rather not.

Next morning an imaginary interview appeared, of course, with my likeness and a circumstantial account of how I had started for the falls, and how “a Delaware Avenue beauty” was to have her portrait painted by me. Where Delaware Avenue was I didn't know, and don't know now, but by intuition I suspect it of being the abode of the Buffalo Four Hundred!

And now the days of my sojourn in the land of liberty were drawing to an end, and I began to prepare for the homeward voyage. One had stayed in the place quite long enough to have 240 put out little roots, as it were, and it was really painful pulling them up.

I had a farewell luncheon with the Italian count and Mrs. L's little son at the Waldorf-Astoria, and later on both she and her husband paid a flying visit to New York to bid me goodbye.

A week or two before I sailed, I met with a final example of American activity and enterprise. An auctioneer called upon me to see whether he could sell any furniture that I might be leaving behind, to be advertised in his sale list as the “contents of my studio.”

The rooms had been almost entirely furnished for me by my landlord, and I told him that there was practically nothing which I was leaving behind me, but a cheap bedstead, one year old, which I'd bought for a few dollars at an Eighth Avenue store, and a very ordinary sofa or settee. These were the only bits of furniture which actually belonged to me.

He assured me that they would suit his purpose, and I let him have them, on condition that the name of some one else, whose goods he intended 241 to include in the same sale, should have equal prominence with my own—so that the public should not be misled with regard to the contents of the studio. A few rough pen-and-ink scribbles that were lying on the table also attracted his attention, and these he quickly purchased from me.

Some days later the following paragraph appeared in the Herald:

At the—Art Galleries this week original drawings and the numerous and beautiful appointments of the studio of Sir Philip Burne-Jones will be sold. With this collection will be sold a miscellaneous collection of objects of art, the property of—and others, etc.

Further accounts of the sale of these valuable drawings and the “numerous and beautiful appointments” of the studio reached me after my return home, as well as a catalogue of eighty-one pages, with reproductions of antique armour and furniture—giving a general impresssion that most of these things had been the contents of my studio. I even heard that the auctioneer waxed eloquent over the heirlooms I had left behind, appealing to the audience when bidding 242 was slack and saying that Sir Philip would weep if he could hear the price that his grandfather's helmet was going for!—or words to that effect. They made a seven days' sale out of it all, and I thought sadly of the old iron bedstead and the shabby settee, and wondered once more at American methods.

Early in April I sailed for England, by the same boat upon which I had crossed nearly fourteen months before. A large basket of apples from Mrs. L. and a box of grape-fruit from Fritz's parents greeted me as soon as I set foot on board. Fritz and his mother were there to see the last of me.

One graceful thing happened on the passage over, which I think could only have originated in the kindliness of an American heart. Each day when the steward called me he brought a little note (tied up in the daintiest pink ribbons) from Mrs. L., accompanied by a present, and, on the last day of all, by a photograph of the Italian count—so that the whole way across the Atlantic for me, at least, the post never failed.

243

And now at last I am in London again.

How quiet the streets seem, and how slowly the people move, and how small and low the houses are! And oh, I grieve to say it, but how untidy and badly dressed nearly all the women look, and how they stoop!

I shall become accustomed to it all quite soon no doubt, but to-day I see things with clear eyes.

To-morrow I shall go and see my friends, from whom I fled so lightly a year ago. The new ones across the sea have never taken their places, and I'm out of the “groove” at last, and life no longer seems stale and unprofitable.

That's all due to America.

I should be deceiving people if I said I'd made a fortune, and I certainly haven't discovered the Ideal Woman, but I've had a very happy year.

And now my impressions of that year are at an end; but long after I am settled again in my English home I shall at times look wistfully toward the setting sun, and dream of frantic street-cars, towering sky-scrapers, and all the rushing eager crowd of the cities of the New World, while far 244 removed from these will linger memories of happy days beside a summer sea, Fritz and Ben and the goat, the Italian count and his lovely hostess, the quiet library at Cambridge, fair faces, and here and there one fairer than the rest, the dinners of New York, and the dazzling ball-rooms of Newport, and deeper in my heart than all the rest will dwell a sense of gratitude and affection for a gracious hospitality such as no other country has to offer the Englishman—the spontaneous, touchingly cordial welcome of the land of El Dorado.

THE END

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